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Robert Gibson
Trinity Church
Cincinnati 1876.

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Front. The Purse found. P. 23

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BY THE

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[illegible]

[illegible] Illustrations.

LONDON:
[illegible] LEDGE, WARNE, & ROUTLEDGE,
[illegible]DWAY, LUDGATE HILL;
NEW YORK: 29, GRAND STREET.
18[illegible].

THE

WHITE BRUNSWICKERS;

OR,

Reminiscences of Schoolboy Life.

BY THE

REV. H. C. ADAMS, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD;

AUTHOR OF "SCHOOLBOY HONOUR," "TALES OF CHARLTON SCHOOL,"

ETC. ETC. ETC.

With Illustrations.

LONDON:

ROUTLEDGE, WARNE, & ROUTLEDGE,

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL;

NEW YORK: 129, GRAND STREET.

1865.

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TO

THE REV. H. HOLDEN, D.D.

Head Master of the Cathedral School, Durham.

My dear Holden,

Anything in which Boys are concerned is likely to interest you: any attempt, however humble, to influence them for good, is sure of your sympathy. The vice of bullying among schoolboys, which forms the theme of this Tale, is one which has cost you many an anxious thought; to suppress which, you have long laboured with that earnest persistency of purpose which your friends know so well. These considerations, together with the pride and pleasure which it gives me to inscribe your name on the first page of one of my books, must be my excuse for dedicating to you so slight a Work as this.

Believe me,

Ever affectionately yours,

H. C. ADAMS.

Bromley College, *September*, 1864.

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THE

WHITE BRUNSWICKERS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE school at which I was educated, belonged to a class which is now, I am told, nearly extinct. Proprietary schools, with their advertising committees, and joint-stock colleges, where the Master is styled "Warden" or "Provost," and the Ushers dignified by the title of "Fellows," have gradually superseded them in popular favour; as the Norway rat is said to have almost extirpated throughout the country the ancient English breed. It was situated—that is to say, the school, not the breed of rats—about five miles from London, in one of the suburban villages, which was in those days, notwithstanding the vicinity of the vast Babel of brick and mortar, a genuine country village.

Railways were as yet the dream of a few *savans*, too

much in advance of their age for practical results, and whom their countrymen generally regarded as suitable inmates for Bedlam. Even omnibuses had not yet chipped the shell. The only public conveyance was the ancient orthodox stage-coach, with its many-coated coachman, its "basket" slung behind, and its sober rate of locomotion; whereby the transit to Martin's Green occupied about the same space of time which it now takes to reach Maidenhead or Gravesend. The boy population—I speak naturally of the class with which we came most into contact—had little in common with the Artful Dodgers and Charley Bates's of the neighbouring metropolis; but consisted of veritable clodhoppers, with skulls as thick and fists as heavy, as are to be found in the remotest hamlets of Dorset or Wilts. We not unfrequently had experience of their physical construction in both these respects, when we went out, as it was the habit of the school to do, on Thursday afternoons during the summer months, to play cricket on the village green, and found the "blackguards," as we politely styled them, in possession of our cricket-ground—or rather what we chose to consider as such. The vanities and luxuries and feats of daring supposed to be rife in great public-schools, did not exist among us. Bull's eyes, toffy, and a detestable compound, made, I believe, of starch, coloured with white or red lead, and sweetened with

sugar, were our richest dainties; our boldest exploit, the slipping out at the back gate, or climbing over the playground wall, in order to make unlawful purchase of the same, or play a game of skittles in the alley kept by the owner of the cake-shop. Yet ours was a large school, numbering as many as a hundred and fifty boys, some of whom had reached their eighteenth year, and who frequently went to the university, and to the messroom of a regiment, without the intervention of public school or private tutor to temper the awe with which so stupendous a change in life was contemplated. I forgot to add that the pediment surmounting the central windows of the mansion bore inscribed on it in large letters the words "Brunswick House," a title said to have been given to it in compliment to Queen Caroline, of unhappy memory. The boys, in consequence, were generally known in the neighbourhood as the "Brunswickers," or sometimes—partly in reference to the white stuccoed front of the building, partly in contradistinction to the sable hussars of the Duke of Brunswick, that queen's gallant brother, whom Waterloo had rendered famous,—as "the White Brunswickers."

The proprietor and master of the school was one Dr. Brooksbank, a name which we profane youngsters thought fit to parody as Brickbats—in acknowledgment partly of the ponderous learning which he was reputed

to possess, and partly of the heaviness of the homilies into which he occasionally expanded when some enormity was brought to his knowledge. He was a portly man of five-and-forty or thereabouts, with a bald head and what may be called a professional cast of features, implying, as it did, a continual expectation that the person with whom he was conversing, was on the point of saying something unbecoming, against which it would be his duty to protest. He was solemnly habited in black breeches and gaiters, except when he went out to dinner or tea, when he exhibited his legs, of which he was traditionally reported as being proud, in black silks and pumps. He was a generation too late for a wig, for which hideous head-dress he had a melancholy hankering, regarding it as the proper attire of schoolmasters, bishops, and judges (I give the precise order and precedence which he, unwittingly perhaps, assigned to those dignitaries), and the surrender of which was, to his mind, a grievous blow to the reverence which their outward appearance ought to inspire. "The schoolmasters have laid it aside, sir," he would say; "almost to a man they have laid it aside; and the bishops, I am told, are beginning to lay it aside too; and perhaps our children will see the very judges themselves give it up. Ah, well"—and here he would pause in an impressive manner, implying that he was glad to think that he at least would never live to witness the

profanation. Yet, notwithstanding these and other small weaknesses, he was a good schoolmaster, as well as an upright and worthy man; and his pupils, many of whom rose to eminence in after-life, retained an affectionate respect for his memory.

There were of course several ushers in so large a school; but for the most part the juniors were liable to continual flux and change, and no usher was looked upon as a genuine member of the establishment until he had survived his second year. We used to wonder at the frequency of the changes among them; but looking back on my school life, the marvel now appears to be, that they should have remained at Brunswick House so long as they did. They were not permitted to vindicate the wrongs they sustained, by the infliction of personal chastisement with their own hands, that privilege being reserved for the Head-master and his three principal assistants; and although he never failed to punish any boy who could be detected in any of the innumerable tricks of which the junior ushers were the objects, yet these formed so small an item in the great total of persecution, that the sufferers soon found that that mode of remedy bore no kind of proportion to the extent of the malady; and were fain either to conciliate the foe, or evacuate the field. But the three principal ushers occupied a different position. They had long been fixtures at Brunswick House, and the boys in

general judged it wiser to avoid warfare in that quarter; aware that in them they would have to encounter the veterans of the ring, possessed of an experience which had been acquired in many a successful round with their predecessors in the school. Not that they escaped scot-free either: only the boys knew that more care and circumspection were required in any fracas they might have with them. There was Rawdon, the first classical master — "Rawbones" we used to call him when speaking of him—or "Rawhead and Bloody Bones," which was the ordinary letter-press description of him, as he stood depicted in the blank leaves of our school-books, or on the white wall of the playground. He was a stiff, pompous man, with a tendency to scragginess—a trait which was done more than justice to in the above-mentioned portraitures of him; and a regular martinet in school and out of it. He was a good scholar, I believe, and probably more of the success which many of the pupils achieved in after-life was due to the grounding he gave them, than was generally acknowledged. But the boys could not abide his unbending rigidity—"donnishness" as we used to call it at the University afterwards. And had it not been for his keen insight into boy-nature, and his long acquaintance with all our dodges and manœuvres, he would have been the subject of innumerable waggeries. Even as it was, Billy Waters and Bob Hunter did contrive to

play such a joke off upon him, as wasn't forgotten for years afterwards in the school. But I haven't time to tell you about that now; it would take too long.

Then there was Mr. Winter, the second classical master; a different sort of man altogether from Rawdon. He wasn't so accurate a scholar, as regarded Latin and Greek, which was thought to be the great thing in those days; but he knew a great many other subjects with which Rawdon had but a very slight acquaintance, if any. He was a good botanist and naturalist, and even knew something of geology, which in those days was not held to be synonymous with infidelity. He was a strict, but a kind master in school, and more like one of the boys themselves out of school-hours, except that he never lost his dignity of character, as I am afraid all of us sometimes did, who had any to lose. He would play cricket for a whole afternoon—and a capital cricketer he was—or fives, and at that he could beat any player in the school, though he was nearer fifty than forty; and he would swim a match in warm weather, or skate one in winter, and enjoy either like any youngster among us. You may judge that we liked him as much as we disliked Rawdon. No fellow ever took a liberty with him that I can remember, notwithstanding all the fun we had in his company. If any boy had done so, Winter would simply have walked away, and I

wouldn't have been in that fellow's shoes after he was gone for something. I expect all the school would have formed a ring round him, while the biggest of us would have given him such a thrashing as would have prevented his lying comfortably in bed for some nights to come, and have made him beg old *Hiems's* pardon into the bargain. We all used to resolve that we would do unheard of things for Mr. Winter, as soon as we grew up to be men—and some of us, I believe, kept our word—and several openings in life were offered to him at one time or another during the nine-and-thirty years of his stay at Brunswick House. But he never could be enticed away by any bait, however tempting. He had grown fond of the school, and the employment, he said; and I afterwards learned that there was a stronger and deeper motive, which induced him to remain Dr. Brooksbank's usher. When the school was broken up by the Doctor's death, he was about sixty-five years of age, and had saved enough to enable him to live comfortably for the rest of his days. He went to live in a small house, about a mile from Martin's Green, with one of the old school servants as his housekeeper; and still continued to the last to teach in the Sunday Schools belonging to the parish, as he had always done while he was at Brunswick House. His old pupils would often go to visit him at Brunswick Cottage, as he called his residence. And

it was there that he told me the incident in his life, which accounted for his almost life-long continuance at Martin's Green. But I mustn't write more about old Winter, or I shall get tedious I am afraid, for I loved him with my whole heart as a boy; and looking back now, an old man, on my experience in life, I believe there have been few truer servants of their Master in Heaven than he was; or who did their Master's work more wisely and faithfully.

Thirdly, there was Mr. Mayhew, the ciphering master. He was a good-natured man too, and we liked him very well, though not to compare with Mr. Winter. He was rather comical looking, having one eye a good deal smaller than the other, for which reason he always went by the sobriquet of "Eighteen Pence," and was greatly given to cut jokes, not always of the most refined description; but at which we deemed it good policy to laugh. He did not, however at all appreciate being the recipient of a jest instead of the author of it, and one day administered such a caning to Billy Waters, whom he overheard calling him by the nickname above mentioned, as struck terror into our hearts, and made us careful not to use the said name in his hearing. Billy attempted to explain that "Eighteen Pence" bore reference to the shillings and pence which formed part of the sum he had that morning set him to do. But Mayhew

was not to be so bamboozled, and he requited him with no less than eighteen cuts with his cane; six over each hand, and six—the most emphatic of all—over another part of his person; a species of retributive justice which Billy by no means appreciated.

But far more important a personage than the ushers—more important than the Doctor himself, was Mrs. Brooksbank, his wife. She was in personal appearance a complete contrast to her lord, being a little dried-up woman, as brisk and nimble in her movements as he was slow and stately; and who in general held him in the most complete subjection, though neither party was fully aware of the fact. As for the boys, they did not in general dislike "Mother Brooksbank" (the title "Brickbats," like that of Lord Chancellor or Bishop, was personal, and did not attach to the other members of the family), or at all events would not have disliked her, had it not been for her fatal propensity for senna and salts; which she introduced in season and out of season, whensoever a possible opening for them could be found. Oh, those wonderful days of drugging when we were young! The disciple of Hahnemann or Gully looks back on them with a mixture of awe and incredulity, such as a cannibal might be supposed to feel after his conversion from Paganism. The "dura messorum ilia" are as nothing compared with the "dura ilia" of a school-

boy of those days. We took calomel and colocynth enough in the course of a half-year to have stocked a chemist's shop; or, according to homœopathic teaching, to have destroyed an army. Well, there are some of us still alive, notwithstanding all we underwent forty years ago; so Allopathy, like joy, does not always kill.

I remember my own first introduction to the good lady's pharmacopœia; and the reader must forgive me, if I am tempted to postpone my story awhile, in order to acquaint him with it. It was in my first half-year, and I was something under seven years of age at the time. I had been playing leap-frog one fine spring morning with my small coequals, and was leaning, out of breath, against a buttress of the playground wall, thinking, like other boys of that age, as nearly as possible about nothing—when one of my schoolfellows, six or seven years older than myself, approached me. His real name was Stapleton, but from his supposed likeness to a facetious character which figured in Punch's show in those times, he was always known as Billy Waters. His countenance, as he drew near, wore an expression of friendly interest mingled with alarm; which in some degree communicated itself to me.

"Why, Jelly," he said, "little Jelly" [I beg to observe in passing that my name was Gell, and not Jelly], "what is the matter with you?"

"Matter?" I said a little startled, "nothing that I know of. What do you suppose is the matter with me?"

"I am not doctor enough to say that," he replied gravely, "though my uncle *is* a physician. But I can see it is something serious—no, I won't say that, because that might alarm you, and after all it *may* not be anything serious. But I can see that you are very ill. Don't you feel something very strange—all-overish, as they say?"

"I—I think I do," I faltered.

"A swimming in your head, a giddiness, an odd sort of feeling, as if you were not exactly ill, but were going to be?"

"Yes, yes," I exclaimed, "I certainly do. What do you think it is, Billy? Please tell me? Is it anything very bad?"

"Humph," replied my questioner, "let me feel your pulse. Have you a watch with a second-hand? mine has none. Oh, here, Charlie," he continued, turning to a boy a year or two older than himself, "yours has a second-hand, I know. Just lend it to me; or rather look at it, and tell me when the minute is up."

Charlie Rivers complied, his features expressing even deeper anxiety than those of his companion. My heart sank into the very soles of my highlows, as I glanced from one face to the other.

"Is not the minute up yet?" exclaimed Billy Waters, after a short interval. "Surely it must be. Poor Jelly's pulse never can be——"

"Just up," exclaimed Rivers, interrupting. "What is his pulse? Not a hundred, I hope."

"No, impossible," said Hunter, who had joined the party, along with one or two others; "it cannot be so serious as that!"

"A hundred and seventy-eight," said Waters in a loud whisper, which was distinctly audible to my keenly awakened senses, "a hundred and seventy-eight, or a hundred and seventy-nine, I can't be certain which. But don't tell him on any account. It must be carefully kept from him. Jelly," he proceeded in a tone of affected carelessness. "Jelly, your pulse is not amiss, but I think it would be advisable to—to——"

"To do what?" I interposed frantically. "Oh, don't deceive me, Billy. I overheard what you told Rivers, though you did not mean me to hear it. Pray tell me what I must do!"

"Well, I think," said my physician, turning gravely to his consulting brethren, and again employing his stage whisper, "that his best, we won't say his *only*, chance will be for him to lose some blood."

"That would bring his pulse down, no doubt," observed Rivers, "but you must not take more than a

gallon or so from him, I should say. Tell me, what do you think the complaint really is?"

"Well, in confidence, I have no doubt it is 'the proxy,'" returned Waters.

"The proxy!" exclaimed Hunter in a tone of horror. "I hope not, I am sure. I had a brother who was taken ill with that, and just in the same way, I am bound to add, two years ago——"

"He did not die, did he?" I asked, unable to suppress my alarm any longer. "He got well, did he not, Hunter?"

Waters shook his head sadly. "I remember the case," he said. "But *he* was not bled in time, or the doctors thought he might have been saved. We won't make the same mistake now, at all events. Run and borrow Davis's lancet, Charlie; and there is a pail, I know, down by the pump, if you would fetch it, Gore. I dare say Hunter will help me to tie up Jelly's arm."

The two boys departed on their respective missions, and Stapleton and his companion proceeded to tear up an old pocket handkerchief—to form bandages, as they said. Meanwhile I leaned against the buttress in a state of mind which, as the penny-a-liners say, is more easily conceived than described. The alternative of a speedy decease by "the proxy,"—a malady all the more terrible because hitherto entirely unknown to

me,—or of being possibly bled to death by the friendly assistance of Billy, was not enlivening.

"Are you sure you know how to bleed, Billy?" I asked at last. "Have you ever bled people before?"

"Oh, yes," replied he assuringly, "I have often bled the horses at home. The coachman generally asks me to do it."

"The horses!" I thought, and a new terror shot through me. I had witnessed the operation of bleeding a horse at a veterinary surgeon's once, when I had accompanied my eldest brother thither on some errand respecting his hunter; and I had no mind to be the subject of the like treatment myself, though Billy Waters were ever so skilful. The spectacle of Rivers and Gore in the distance, the one carrying a case and the other a housemaid's pail in his hand, did not tend to restore my composure. I suddenly remembered Mrs. Brooksbank, and her strict injunction to me at the beginning of the half-year to apply to her whenever I felt unwell; and before any of the party could interfere to stop me, I fled at the top of my speed into the house. Stapleton and his companions divining my purpose, as soon as they had recovered from their surprise, ran after me, shouting to me to return. But I was too much alarmed to heed them, and the appearance of Mr. Winter, who chanced at that moment to be issuing from the house, put a stop to their pursuit.

Mr. Winter, noticing, I suppose, the agitation which my face expressed, called to me to stop, and tell him what was the matter; but I rushed hurriedly by him, and entering the house, plunged desperately into the quarters sacred to Mrs. Brooksbank.

The worthy dame looked round in some surprise at my hasty entrance. She was weighing out, with the assistance of her prime minister Martha, some mysterious compound—mysterious in my eyes, at all events—and was attired in a huge brown holland apron, with sleeves to match, a costume and occupation in which, so far as my observation extended, she passed her whole time, except when in attendance on the boys.

"Please, ma'am," I said, as soon as I could speak, "I feel very ill."

The matron looked at me curiously, but not without a certain complacency. "Does your stomach ache?" she asked.

"No, ma'am," I replied.

"Do you feel sick, my dear?"

"No, ma'am."

"Is your head bad?"

"No, ma'am."

Mrs. Brooksbank had exhausted the ordinary phases of boy-maladies. "What is the matter then, Gell?"

"Please, ma'am," I answered solemnly, "I have got the proxy."

"The what?" inquired Mrs. Brooksbank and Martha in the same breath.

"The proxy, please, ma'am."

The good dame surveyed me again with increased curiosity. "Where do you feel any pain?" she asked.

"Please, ma'am," said I, recalling the particulars of Waters's diagnosis. "I feel very strange and all-overish, with a giddiness and a swimming in my head, —and my pulse——"

"Well, what about your pulse?"

"Please, ma'am, my pulse is a hundred and seventy-eight; and do you think I ought to be bled? And is it the proxy, and *do* you think it is dangerous?"

Mrs. Brooksbank's countenance recovered its wonted serenity. "Who felt your pulse for you, my dear?" she asked.

"Billy Waters, ma'am,—that is to say, James Stapleton," I replied.

"Go and fetch Master Stapleton here," said Mrs. Brooksbank, turning to Martha.

"They have been talking nonsense to you, my boy," she said, as soon as the servant had left the room. "But a little clearing medicine will do you no harm, nor Master Stapleton either."

"I had not yet recovered from the effects of my *maladie imaginaire* sufficiently to offer any remon-

strance to this proposition. But poor Billy Waters, who had anticipated some such result on his own account when he beheld me disappear in Mrs. Brooksbank's arcanum, protested and entreated to the utmost of his ability; alleging that his health had never been so good as it was at the present time, and that senna and salts were extremely bad for his constitution, on which account his doctor at home had positively interdicted them. His representations were all in vain. We had both of us to take the regulation dose, which the lady's long experience had determined to be the correct one; and remained close prisoners for the remainder of the day. Billy's general tone of health may have been improved by the medicine, for anything I know; but his temper certainly was not. In the course of the afternoon he imparted to me more than once an opinion respecting myself which was not flattering, interspersed with obscure threats of "serving me out for it." These, however, he never carried out. I do not know whether it was that he thought the joke on the whole had turned rather against him, and he did not wish to attract public attention again to it; or whether a long talk the next day with Mr. Winter, who had a good deal of influence with him, induced him to lay aside his intention; but he not only forbore to visit me with his displeasure, but never made me the subject of his practical jokes again.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAT-HUNT.

I WAS a very little fellow in those days, as the reader has already been told; and though the boys teased me a little sometimes, yet it was always in a good-natured way. The truth was, that my littleness was my chief protection. The other fellows were ashamed to hurt such a scrap of humanity; and even the greatest bullies in the school would have turned against any one who attempted it. But I was a rare exception to the rule. Bullying is said, whether truly or not I am not prepared to determine, to have been more general in schools of the description to which I belonged than in others; but certainly there was a grievous amount of it during my sojourn at Brunswick House. The juniors went through hardships, and were subjected to petty cruelties, which really shock me to remember, even at this distance of time. Were they to be perpetrated now-a-days, all England would experience a fervour of indignation over a column and a half of nervous Saxon-English, occupying a conspicuous place in the broadsheet of that Arch-priest of Philan-

thropy, the *Times*. But there was this difference between the boys of the present and of my generation, —that we never complained to our papas and mammas of what we suffered. There was a feeling, I believe, that it was mean to do so; that it was "telling;" and it is incredible what a boy will submit to, sooner than be held guilty of that inexpiable offence. Well, as I have intimated elsewhere, *tant mieux* in my judgment, so far as the sufferers are concerned. It is no slight gain to a boy, if he learns to endure patiently and silently. Such discipline braces the sinews for the great struggle of life, as no other training can do; and has turned the doubtful scale in many a man's favour, when, but for that, the day would have gone against him. But the misfortune was, that the persecution which the juniors underwent at the hands of their elders did not teach them the lesson of forbearance and mercy, when they themselves attained to the upper places in the school. Unhappily, in most instances, they seemed to treat the matter as though their school life had been a game of cricket. They had been fagging out in their opinion during the years of the juniority: now it was their innings, and they meant to make the most of it; and a very bad most of it I fear they generally made.

The head boys of the school, during my first half-year, were five in number. I remember those five

boys—every particular of their personal appearance and peculiarities of disposition, as if I had lived with them all my life. To be sure, the first class was a small one that year, and the boys were all different in character from one another; but I believe I should remember them with equal accuracy if there had been twenty of them, instead of a quarter of that number.

There was Norton, the junior of the class—rather a dull fellow we thought him. It used to be matter of wonder how he had contrived to attain to the dignity of the first class; nor did we scruple to insinuate that promotion in his instance had gone, as kissing is said to go; that is, by favour. The younger boys suffered a good deal at his hands; yet he could hardly be called a bully proper; but almost always followed the lead of others of more inventive genius than himself. However, he was as heartily disliked as he could possibly have been, if all the hardships he inflicted had been of his own devising—rather more so, I think, for the boys could find nothing to admire in him, as they did in some of the others, and therefore there was nothing to mitigate the feeling against him. Saving and excepting Joyce, he was the most unpopular boy in the school. Next to him came Brackley, a good-natured, indolent fellow, fond of his own ease and comfort, and thinking very little of that of others, if

it happened to interfere with his. He was in general too lazy to bully other boys; but at the same time much too lazy to interfere to prevent his companions doing so.

The third in the class was Joyce, the object of our peculiar hatred and disgust. It is true that he was spiteful rather than cruel, and was more given to tease boys, than to hurt them. But there was more malice in him, we all felt, than in all the rest of the first class combined. He took delight in spoiling any fun which afforded particular pleasure to the boys; and if he chanced to dislike any fellow, would contrive with great ingenuity to say and do the thing which would cause him the greatest annoyance. We used always to declare that Joyce was a coward, and one or two old traditions were regularly cited in proof of it; but whether they were authentic or apocryphal, I am unable to say.

Then there was Trevor, a very different style of fellow from any before mentioned. He was as high-spirited and open-hearted as Joyce was underhand and reserved. He had always been too good-natured to bully any one; but his careless easiness of temper had rendered him not so much indifferent to, as unobservant of, the discomforts endured by others; and it was only during the last half-year of his stay in the school, that he took the decided line in trying to put down bully-

ing, which got him into so much trouble, and produced such serious consequences; about which the reader will hear all in good time.

The last to be named was the head boy, George Dalison; and of him it may certainly be said, that though he comes last, he was not least, in our estimation. He was the tallest and strongest boy in the school, and the best boxer; he having studied that art, it was said, under one of the most renowned pugilists of the day. Much as we feared and shunned him, we were all proud of his exploits; and would descant upon them with admiration, such as that which the old soldiers of the Empire bestowed on the victories of Napoleon. Did he not, only a few weeks previously, administer a tremendous thrashing to the leader of "the snobs"—a young publican, who for a long time past had been in the habit of reviling the inmates of Brunswick House; offering, for the smallest consideration, to settle any three of them? Did not the audacious ribald go so far as even to declare that we ought to be called, not the "White Brunswickers," but the "White *feather* Brunswickers," because no one at once stepped forth to answer his challenge? And did not Dalison, when informed of this outrageous insult, encounter this Goliah on the very next half-holiday; and with a result which made every heart leap with triumph? Why, the fight was nothing but one long-continued mauling

and pounding of the luckless publican, who vainly attempted to retaliate on his enemy any of the blows he so liberally received; until at last his strength, great as it was, was completely exhausted, and he was led off, a pitiable spectacle, to the shelter of the paternal tap-room! Why, Bullface—that was the name wherewith we complimented the publican—why, Bullface could hardly stagger off the ground, supported by two of his backers; while the victorious Brunswicker resumed his coat, waistcoat, and necktie, as coolly as though he had been engaged in a friendly trial with the gloves. The boys were never weary of recounting, with Homeric force and minuteness, the particulars of this celebrated combat; how Bullface had got it over the left eye in the second round, and over the right eye in the fifth, and over the mouth and nose in the third and fourth rounds; and how he went down finally like a shot, when a heavy salute over the ear in the twelfth round put a period to the fight. It was impossible not to be proud of a champion like this; and the boys would have endured almost any amount of hardship at his hands, if they could only have liked him. But he was not only cruel, but *coldly* cruel. It was his amusement to sit by, and see fellows suffer; much as in the darkest times of the old heathen world it was a favourite pastime to watch unarmed men wrestling naked with

wild animals, or dying under the tortures of the stake. This may seem to be comparing great things with small, to an unreasonable extent. But I am afraid that the one state of mind is but a further development of the other; and that every genuine schoolboy bully is an embryo Nero or Domitian, and will grow to their stature, unless events interpose to check the growth. Well, the fellows couldn't like an embryo Domitian, you see, however brave he might be; and so, though they didn't despise Dalison as they did Joyce, they hated him, as boys only can hate.

I half think I hear some of my readers exclaim at this point of the narrative, that what is told of Dalison is not natural; for if he were as brave, he would not have been so cruel, as he is represented. Ah, but that notion, that cruel men or boys are never brave, is one of the strangest mistakes imaginable. Proverbs are, I grant, not often mistaken, but the proverb which couples cowardice and cruelty as inseparable is an exception. Cruel men are never *chivalrously* brave; their courage is always of a cold, sullen character, but they will defy danger and death as determinedly as the veriest Paladin. Witness the Roman Emperor Maximin, Pedro of Spain, and many others; witness Danton and St. Just; Rush and Palmer in our own times. Mere hardihood is no evidence of humanity. It belongs to the lower part of man's nature, and is

shared by him with the most ferocious animals,—nay, with the devils themselves.

We used to wonder how there could ever have been any cordiality between two fellows so different as Trevor and Dalison, and for several years, indeed until within a few months, they had been quite cronies. But then they had come to Martin's Green together years before, and had been put in the same room and the same class, and had gone up the school together, and got in and out of scrapes and roughed it together all the days of their school life; and that makes a bond of union between fellows that is not easily dissolved. Besides, it was only latterly that Dalison had come out as the decided bully of the smaller boys. While he was himself a junior, he had enough to do to keep out of trouble himself; and even when he got too big for that, he would have been liable to get overhauled by one of the boys older and stronger than himself, who might perhaps find as much amusement in worrying him as he did in worrying others.

But the principal reason for the long continuance of their friendship was the one before given—that Frank Trevor was naturally too thoughtless to consider much the trials of others; and had it not been for a circumstance which had occurred not long before the affair of "the proxy," related in the last chapter, he

might have continued friends with Dalison to the day of his leaving Brunswick House.

It happened one afternoon that the boys had gone out, as usual on half-holidays, to play a cricket match on the green. It was the last day of the year, on which they were allowed to go beyond the bounds of the playground; and the match in which they had been engaged had come to an end earlier than had been expected. There intervened three quarters of an hour or so, during which they had nothing definite wherewith to amuse themselves, and consequently were in a humour which rendered them ripe for the perpetration of any mischief that might happen to come in their way. They first of all divided themselves into two parties, which threw the cricket-balls from one side to the other. Presently to the cricket-ball were added other missiles, in the shape of bails, stumps, and finally pebbles, until the whole array settled down into a regular stoning match, in which it was little short of a miracle that ten per cent. at least of the eyes on both sides were not put out. Just at the time when the "stony sleet of pebbly shower" was at its height an unlucky cat ran straight across the turf between the belligerent parties, and in a moment attracted the whole of the hurricane upon herself. With a shout of ecstacy both sides broke their ranks and hurried in hot pursuit. Puss made capital

sport, running straight as a line to an elm at the furthest end of the green, into which she scrambled, mounting into one of the upper boughs, and affording a famous mark for the missiles of the assailants. Dislodged by a skilful stroke of Trevor's, for which he received unbounded applause, she again took to her heels, and, though evidently crippled by the blow she had received, contrived to scramble through a hedge into a copse which lay beyond it, where it was very difficult to reach her. At last a fragment of a brickbat struck her full on the head, and she rolled over to rise no more.

The crowd slowly left the spot and began to straggle homewards; and Trevor chancing to fall in with Mr. Winter, who was issuing from the house, was invited by the latter to take a short turn with him before supper. The boy willingly complied, as the usher was particularly kind and friendly to him, and he always greatly enjoyed his company. They were returning, deep in an interesting conversation, about an hour afterwards, when their attention was attracted by a child in a cottage garden close at hand, who seemed to be crying and sobbing bitterly. They both stood still at the sound, and Mr. Winter opening the garden gate saw a little girl of ten years old bending over something which he could not clearly distinguish, as it was half hidden by her dress, but which appeared to be the cause of her distress.

"What is the matter, little Susy?" asked the usher, recognizing one of his Sunday scholars.

The child lifted up her tear-stained face as she heard the kind voice, but she made no reply.

"Has anybody been hurting you?" pursued Mr. Winter.

The little girl again bent down in the same attitude as before, unable, as it appeared, to return any answer; and the usher advancing further into the garden, came in sight of the object over which she was leaning. Trevor had recognized it at a glance. It was the cat which he and his companions had been hunting an hour ago. It was not a pleasant spectacle to contemplate, and the boy noticed an expression of pain and disgust pass over his companion's face. One of its legs was broken, as was evident from the manner in which it hung loose from the socket. Its skin was torn in several places and dabbled with dirt and blood. One eye was beaten out and the other was fast glazing in death. But weak and almost senseless as it seemed, it was still making a feeble attempt to lick its little mistress's hands in answer to her caresses.

"Oh, Tibbie, Tibbie!" sobbed the child, bursting out again into the cries which had before attracted Mr. Winter's attention. "What have they done to you? Oh, Tibbie, don't die, my darling. Oh, do you think, sir," she added, while a sudden gleam of hope

came over her features, as she looked up again into Mr. Winter's kind face, "do you think you can cure her? She won't die, will she?"

"I am afraid she will, my poor little girl," said he in reply. "And you would not wish her to live, even if it were possible. Nothing could ever cure her, and she would do nothing but suffer pain and misery all the rest of her life. You must let her lie quite quietly, and she will soon be released from her suffering."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the little girl, who was evidently soothed by the tone rather than the words of Mr. Winter's reply. "She was so fond of me. She would follow me about everywhere, and would eat out of my hand and lie for hours in my lap. And she belonged to sister Annie, who lies in the churchyard; and I have no one to play with now sister's dead except Tibbie." And here she broke into a fresh paroxysm of sorrow as she saw her little favourite, after a few more convulsive twitches, stretch out its limbs in the stiffness of death.

Mr. Winter tried vainly to comfort her by promising to get her a kitten as like her pet as possible, whom she might call by the same name, and who in a few months would grow fond of her and become her playfellow.

"It wouldn't be Tibbie," she exclaimed; "it wouldn't be Tibbie, sir," she said. "Thank you for being sorry for her, but no other would be my Tibbie,

or Annie's Tibbie either. I shall never care for another again. Oh! how could they be so cruel as to kill her? She never hurt anybody, sir; she was the best cat, Annie used to say, that ever was, and never stole anything or harmed anybody."

Finding all his efforts at consolation vain, Mr. Winter was about to depart, promising to return the next day and see her again, when the garden gate behind him opened, and a tall, strong man, in a working dress—a journeyman bricklayer or labourer, from his appearance—came in.

"Why, Susy, child!" he exclaimed, as his eye rested on her face, swollen and black with crying; "why, Susy, what's the matter, lass? Who's been a-hurting of you, I should like to know?" he continued, somewhat angrily, glancing at the usher and his younger companion.

"Oh! look here, father," cried the child, catching him by the coat-tail and drawing him towards her; "look here, what they've done to poor Tibbie."

"Tibbie, child! what, thy cat! and so 'tis, sure enow. This is some of thy works," he added, turning with an angry oath to Trevor, "some of thy works and thy mates'. I know thee; thou art one o' the chaps up at the big school yonder. Hasn't thee pleasure enow with thy cricket-playings, and thy guzzlings o' tarts and cakes, and thy fine clothes, and

the like, that thee must go to torture a poor beast for thy 'musement, and my little Susy's pet into the bargain? Darngn't if I havn't a mind to gi' thee as good a hiding as ever thou hadst in thy life, and save thy schoolmaster a trouble;" and as he spoke, he stepped threateningly up to Trevor, who, conscience-smitten rather than frightened, stood still, unable to utter a word in his own defence. Mr. Winter, however, interposed to prevent the threatened violence, and motioned to Trevor to leave the garden.

"What reason had you, my good friend," he said, turning to the man when this had been done, "for charging this outrage on the boys of Dr. Brooksbank's school? I don't wonder at your being angry. It is enough to make any one so. But I don't see why you suppose that this young gentleman or his companions had anything to do with it. At all events, he is innocent; for he is only now returning from a walk, which he has been taking with me."

"Ask your pardon, sir," said the man, who had not noticed Mr. Winter before. "You are Mr. Winter, I am thinking, as teaches at our Sunday school, and my little Dick and Phil often talks o' your kindness to 'em; I'd be loth to hurt any friend o' yourn. But as for who killed my little un's pet, there ain't no doubt on that. I see 'em a matter of an hour or more agone, hunting the poor dumb animal down by Farmer Ball's coppice. I didn't know who's cat it were, I

were too far off, at work on the top of Mr. Grange's new houses, but I'd a'most a mind to leave work, and come and stop 'em from tormenting of the poor brute. If I'd knowed it had been my Susy's favourite, I'd have given one or two on 'em a lesson as they wouldn't have forgot."

"Are you certain they were Dr. Brooksbank's boys that you saw?" inquired Mr. Winter.

"Sartain sure, sir. I knows them right well; as is likely I should, seeing I sees 'em every week of my life, when I passes 'em going home from work; and as for the young gent, as come with you, I am precious mistaken if I didn't see him among 'em. I noticed his white hat and check trousers. He was the only one among 'em dressed in that way. Still I can't be sure—not for to be sartain sure—at such a distance, and if I spoke too hasty, sir, I hope you'll be pleased to overlook it. It goes for to stir a man's blood, sir, to see his poor little motherless girl made to cry in this here way."

"There is no need to ask my pardon, I'm sure," said Mr. Winter. "You may rely upon it I will make inquiries, and if it should turn out that you are right in your conjecture, the boys shall be properly punished. Good bye, Susy," added Mr. Winter, as he passed out through the gate, "good bye, Susy, I shall come and see you again soon."

Meanwhile, Trevor had been standing outside the

garden gate, in a very uncomfortable frame of mind. He expected that Mr. Winter would question him as to his knowledge of the transaction, and he felt that he would fall greatly in his master's good opinion when he ascertained the truth. It would be of no use to tell him that he had joined in the cat-hunt through mere thoughtlessness; and had had no desire to inflict cruel and unnecessary suffering. He knew what Mr. Winter would say, and felt himself that such an excuse was really worth nothing. It would serve him right if he were severely punished, and were to lose the usher's favour for ever afterwards. He walked silently by Mr. Winter's side, expecting every instant to hear him commence the subject. But the latter spoke very little, and that little had no reference to the scene they had just witnessed. Only as they passed the tree in which the cat had taken refuge—the ground round which was covered with stones, leaves, and fragments of bark—the usher stood still for a moment, and glanced first at the branches of the elm and then at Trevor's face, which was now suffused with crimson; but he made no remark, and in a few minutes they reached Brunswick House.

Trevor, glad to be released, was hurrying away, when his companion called after him, and told him that as they were late for the boys' supper, he should be glad to give him a cup of tea in his own room presently.

CHAPTER III.

THE USHER'S STORY.

MR. WINTER occupied the snuggest of two small studies, which lay between the school-room and the boys' dining-hall, and which had in the first instance been intended for a pantry and store-room. But it had been discovered that the close proximity of the boys was not favourable to the safe custody of such of the stores as formed tempting articles of food, or to the peaceful performance of the servants' work; and the two apartments were converted into sitting-rooms for the two head ushers. Mr. Winter's room looked out on Mrs. Brooksbank's flower-garden; beyond which lay the boys' playground, divided from it by a low wall. He had generally a few choice flowers on his window—outside or inside, according to the season of the year—which scented the air very pleasantly. One side of the room was completely lined with books, nearly all of them presents from old pupils; who were aware that this kind of offering would be the most acceptable to him, since the narrowness of his means alone prevented his gratifying his taste in that way

himself. Over the mantelpiece hung a water-colour drawing, representing a landscape of lofty crags, spanned by a narrow bridge of the rudest construction; being nothing, apparently, but a single plank thrown across, and a fragile handrail above it. This was the only ornament of the room, and the boys who were admitted to Mr. Winter's study were much divided in opinion respecting it; some affirming it to be a view in Wales, while others maintained that it was a fancy sketch. There was a good deal of curiosity on the subject; which was perhaps caused by the fact that Mr. Winter himself never seemed inclined to talk on the subject, but always turned away the conversation when any reference was made to it.

On the evening of Trevor's invitation, the little room looked more than commonly cosy. There was a bright fire on the hearth, for the evenings were already beginning to be chilly, and in front of it stood a small table, on which the tea-things were laid out, with a chair on either side. The one farthest from the door was occupied by Mr. Winter, according to his invariable practice. Indeed, his guests would have felt more discomposed than himself, if he had sat anywhere else. Presently a tap at the door was heard, and Trevor entered.

"Well, Frank," said Mr. Winter, when the tea-things had been removed; "I have got the volume

of prints which you wanted to see. Dr. Stevens sent it over a day or two ago; but he is very anxious that it should not be injured, so you must look at it here." He placed a large folio on the table as he spoke, and Frank's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the sight. He forgot for the moment the uneasiness, which the remembrance of the afternoon's adventure had left on his mind. He had entered the room, resolved to tell Mr. Winter the part which he had taken in the affair, and to bear the consequences, whatever they might be. It was plain, he thought, that his master did not suspect him of any share in it, or he would not have invited him to his room; and this consideration was doubly painful to him, as he felt he was receiving his kindness under false pretences. But the delight which the unexpected appearance of the book afforded him, drove this for the time from his recollection. It consisted of a beautiful collection of prints of animals from the works of the most celebrated animal-painters, made by Dr. Stevens himself, who had spared neither trouble nor expense in pursuit of a subject which was his especial fancy. Trevor was exceedingly fond of Natural History; and in those days, when Zoological Gardens and Useful Knowledge prints were alike unknown, it was not an easy thing to gratify his taste. He seated himself at the table forthwith, and opening the large

folio volume, was soon deeply absorbed in its contents.

Presently Mr. Winter came and looked over his shoulder. "What is it that interests you so much, Frank? You have not turned a page for ten minutes past."

"The wild ass, Sir; the onager it is called here. What a beautiful creature it seems to be! Can that be the same animal we have in this country, only in a wild state?"

"I believe so; why should it not?"

"It seems so different; I see it is described as being—what it looks—one of the swiftest as well as one of the handsomest animals in the world; whereas the donkeys in this country are very ugly creatures, and anything but swift. Does wild and tame make such a difference as that?"

"If by wild and tame, you mean the being trained to do man's work, as opposed to their natural state, I should say certainly not. Many animals are raised in the scale of creation by their intercourse with man; as for instance, the dog and the horse, and some others. Don't you remember what we were reading the other day about the speed of the wild horses, and the Arabs belonging to the Caliph, as compared with that of English race-horses?"

"Yes, I remember it was said that they would out-

strip any wild horse, as well as endure longer. How do you account for the difference, sir?"

"Think a moment, Frank. Does no reason suggest itself to you?"

Trevor pondered awhile, and then said: "Has it anything to do with the difference of their food, sir?"

"Well, partly, no doubt. English race-horses are always fed with the best food, and have plenty of it. But that is only a part of the reason. Think again."

"Well, I recollect my father taking me over to see Lord Everstone's race horses," said Trevor, "and he said their fine condition was a good deal owing to their careful grooming, and their being lodged in fine, airy, warm stables, and being regularly exercised, and so on."

"Just so, to the care and thought bestowed upon them," said Mr. Winter; "in short, to the kind way in which they are treated. Trainers take good care that the grooms use the horses kindly, and would discharge any one who was harsh and brutal with them. Well, now, compare with this the treatment which the donkey commonly receives in this country, and you will not wonder that the horse improves, and the ass deteriorates, from contact with man. The poor ass usually gets the coarsest food, the worst lodging, scarcely any grooming, and is continually beaten and illused.

Cruelty, Frank, is the most shortsighted, as it is the most hateful, of vices."

Trevor coloured deeply at Mr. Winter's words, the purport of which could not be misunderstood, even if his tone had not been significant enough in itself to mark his meaning. He was on the point of speaking, when the usher pressed his hand on his shoulder, as if enjoining silence, and turning over several leaves, laid the book open at a large engraving near the end. It was one of Hogarth's prints, the first of the celebrated series, called the "Progress of Cruelty." Dr. Stevens had placed it and its companion engravings at the end of his collection, in all likelihood as a suitable moral wherewith to close it. Frank looked, with an expression of horror and disgust, at the barbarities which the boy in the first plate, and the youth in the second, is there depicted as inflicting on the brute creation. But when Mr. Winter turned to the third on the list, in which the cruel boy and cruel man consummates his cruelty by *murder*, he looked up with white lips into his master's face, and exclaimed in a low voice, "Please do not show me any more."

"No," said Mr. Winter, closing the book, and restoring it to the shelf whence he had taken it, "I have no intention of showing you the last plate. It is not fit for you to see. I am sorry to have pained you,

Frank, I need not tell you that. But it is better that you should suffer far deeper pain, than remain in ignorance of your sin."

"And do you really think, sir, that—that—what we were doing to-day could ever lead to such dreadful things as there were in those pictures?"

"Hogarth knew human nature, Frank, better than most men. Yes, I am afraid there is no doubt that cruelty, if unchecked, would grow upon a man, or a boy either, until every trace of humanity would be lost. It is not without reason that Cowper calls cruelty the most devilish of all vices. I think a thoroughly cruel man is more like a fiend upon earth than any character I can conceive."

"But, Mr. Winter," pleaded Frank earnestly, "we did not—I am sure I did not, at all events—intend to torture the poor cat. I am ashamed and sorry as I can be, sir; but I did not think she would suffer so much, or that she was the little girl's pet, and besides, there is—"

"No, I do not mean to charge you with deliberately intending to torture either the one or the other; but few even of the lowest criminals do deliberately intend to commit their worst deeds. It is that they think only of their own profit or pleasure: and earlier in their career they would utterly abhor what they afterwards do without scruple. But what else?"

—"And there is surely a difference, sir, between hurting animals and hurting men."

"Very little, I fear. The Bible tells us that 'the merciful man is merciful to his beast.' The habit of mercy, that is, makes him include beast as well as man in his mercy. It may well be added, that 'the unmerciful man is unmerciful to his brother man:' the habit of cruelty makes him also to include all in his cruelty. Tell me, Frank," he continued, fixing his eyes full upon him, "do the ringleaders of the cat-hunt to-day—I have learned more about it since we came in—do they never inflict torture; in plainer English, do they never *bully* the younger boys here?"

"Whom do you mean?" inquired Trevor, hesitatingly.

"I mean the boys who, I have learned, were the leaders of the chase after the cat. You know their names as well as I do."

"Joyce and Norton bully the juniors sometimes: and they say Dalison does so too," faltered the boy. "But I can assure you I do not."

"You mean that you do not instigate bullying, Frank," interposed the other, perceiving that he hesitated—"No, I do not believe you capable of originating cruelty; but I am afraid you are apt to join in bullying others, much as you joined in stoning the poor cat to-day. At all events you stand by, and let them be

bullied without remonstrance; and there is no surer way of learning evil, than by letting others do it without trying to prevent it. Remember that noble line, 'He who allows oppression shares the crime.'"

Trevor made no reply; but sat staring at the fire in a very unquiet frame of mind. Mr. Winter did not at first resume the conversation. Presently he said abruptly, "You asked me just now whether the habit of bullying in a boy would in my judgment grow naturally into a confirmed habit of cruelty in a man. I answer, yes,—unless God's mercy should interpose, as it sometimes does, to startle the conscience and change the heart. I should like to tell you a story, which came to my knowledge in early life. The circumstances are too painful for me to speak of them generally. But it may be useful for you to hear them; and there is just time before prayers:—

"I was educated at L——, a large school which was celebrated in its day, though it has lost its great reputation now. It was situated in a beautiful neighbourhood abounding in high rocky scenery, and we used to run during play-hours almost wild over the crags, though forbidden by the rules to do so. There were two boys in the school, while I was there, whose names were Philip and Francis. Philip was the elder, and was sent at a very early age to L——. He underwent a good deal of hardship during the first

years of his stay there. He was made to do all kinds of menial work for his seniors, and was kicked and cuffed without measure when he did not do it to their satisfaction. He was constantly sent on unlawful errands; and if he chanced to be detected in these, he was not only punished by the masters, but received trebly severe punishment from his boy-masters into the bargain. For a year or two, in fact, he led the life of a galley-slave. But he was strong and hardy, and lived through it all without suffering any lasting injury.

"One might have thought that the cruelty he had sustained would have given him a fellow-feeling for others, when he rose to become one of the leaders of the school. But it seemed to have just the opposite effect. He was not a bad-hearted fellow, I believe; but he had no kind of consideration for the smaller boys; ordering them about for his amusement or convenience as he pleased, and never troubling himself how wretched they might be made by his usage.

"Among others there came to L——, in the last half-year of his stay there, a boy named Francis: a poor delicate little fellow, shy and nervous beyond what even delicate boys ordinarily are. He chanced to be put to sleep in Philip's room, and became his principal fag. He had a great deal of hard work to do for his

master—harder, I fancy, than his strength was equal to. It was in consequence often badly done, and he received some sharp thrashings for his supposed neglect. These he bore in silence; but he never could be induced to do things which he considered wrong in themselves, as I have already said, were often required of the juniors; such as going out to buy spirits, or filch coals and wood from the head-master's cellar. Neither entreaty nor violence could shake his resolution on this head. But the poor little fellow gradually grew so nervous and timid, that he would start and tremble like a leaf at the slightest alarm. Far from pitying him, however, Philip was rather amused than otherwise at this exhibition of terror, and would sometimes throw up his arm, as though he were going to thrash him when he had no intention of doing so, and be diverted at the recoil, like that of a frightened horse, which Francis never failed to make, when he saw the movement.

"I think I said that the school was situated near some high and precipitous crags, inland cliffs, in fact, which the boys were in the habit occasionally of exploring, in order to find the nests of birds which built there. In particular, there was one very high crag which stood separate from the others, and could only be approached by a rude bridge laid across the chasm from the nearest eminence. The gulf thus spanned was perhaps

ten or twelve feet wide, and the depth from two hundred and fifty to three hundred feet.

"One day Philip, who was something of a botanist, resolved to visit the spot, having learned that some specimens of a very rare plant were to be found there; and he desired Francis to accompany him with a basket. The little boy was secretly rather alarmed at venturing over the frail bridge which lay across the chasm; but he dared not remonstrate; and the two, ascending the cliff together, soon reached the spot in safety. Philip began immediately to search for the plants, and was fortunate enough to find several fine specimens, which he handed to Francis to be deposited in the basket. Just as they had collected all that was required, and were on the point of setting out homeward, the younger boy accidentally let the basket drop, which rolled along the scarp of the rock, and disappeared over the precipice. Philip, as he witnessed the mishap, uttered an angry exclamation, and was going to strike him a violent blow, but Francis, perceiving his intention, ran off, followed by Philip in the direction of the bridge. I mentioned before that this was very frail, consisting, in fact, of a single plank, which had become rotten from exposure to the rain. It had borne Philip's weight, when he crossed it before at a walk, but as he rushed violently upon it in pursuit of his companion, it snapped in two, and the fragments sunk crashing

Francis saves Philip. P. 47.

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into the abyss. Philip, as he fell, caught at the branches of an elder, which grew a few feet down the precipice, and hung almost perpendicularly over the gulf, which lay three hundred feet beneath him. That moment of terror made an altered character of him for life. The follies and sins of his school life rushed upon his remembrance with terrible force and minuteness; and chief among them was the harshness and cruelty with which he had treated Francis. No one who has not, like him, looked death directly in the face, can understand what his sensations were at the instant. He clung to the branch with the convulsive grasp of despair; but his hold was giving way, and he was on the very point of falling, when a face appeared on the platform above him. It was little Francis, who had heard the crash and Philip's cry for help; and who, terror-stricken as he was, had nerved himself to the rescue of his tyrant. Clinging firmly to the root of a large tree, he leaned over the cliff, and dropped one end of his handkerchief to him, retaining the other firmly knotted round his wrist. Philip caught it, as a drowning sailor catches at a plank thrown overboard by his companions. Holding it in his left hand, and still retaining his gripe on the branch in his right, it enabled him to climb on to the trunk of the elder, and thence by the help of Francis's hand to reach the firm ground above in safety. After a few moments of rest

to regain his scattered senses, Philip jumped up and advanced with outstretched hand to thank his deliverer; but——"

Mr. Winter made a pause, overpowered by deep emotion.

"But what, sir?" exclaimed Trevor hastily. "Surely Philip never could have bullied him again after that?"

"He never had the opportunity," said the usher in a low voice; "I suppose the boy's nerves had been unstrung by the hairbreadth escape he had just witnessed; and long association had accustomed him to shrink back whenever he saw Philip approach him. But however that may have been, he mistook the meaning of the elder boy's hurried movement towards him. No sooner did he see him raise his hand, than he sprung backwards and fell over the precipice, from which he had a few minutes before rescued his companion."

"And he was killed?" asked Trevor almost in a whisper.

"He was, Frank. He was taken up so crushed and mangled, that his mother could not have recognised him."

"And Philip, sir, what became of him?"

"Philip went home and told what had happened; but they said he seemed as if he were more dreaming than awake, and it was some time before any one could be induced to believe his story. The next day he was

taken dangerously ill with brain-fever, and the half-year had come to an end long before he was able to leave his bed. He was then removed from L——. It had been intended that he should go to the University and take orders—but he did not do so. I have been told that he was very little heard of in the world afterwards."

Mr. Winter relapsed again into silence, which was not broken until the sound of the prayer-bell was heard; and Trevor rising, wished him good-night, and left the room without further remark. But that was a day in his life which he remembered ever afterwards. Mr. Winter had long been anxious for an opportunity to do something towards repressing the unusual amount of bullying which, he was aware, was at the present time being carried on at Brunswick House, and he had fixed on Frank Trevor as the most likely instrument for suppressing it successfully. He knew by long experience, that the authority of a master has in general but little power of reaching this particular evil, and that mere punishment almost invariably aggravates it. It is through the influence of the elder boys alone that the mischief can be arrested; and among all the first-class boys Trevor was the only one with whom he had much prospect of success. It was a delicate and difficult thing to talk even to Frank on such a subject, which is one from which boys almost always draw back when spoken to by their masters, and retreat into vague

denials, and still vaguer generalities. Advice and exhortation respecting it are like the Dervish's ointment in the "Arabian Nights," which applied discreetly, opens the mind to the discernment of the most invaluable truths; but applied to the wrong eye, as it were, of the soul, is apt to produce a more obstinate blindness.

Mr. Winter perceived that *his* ointment had been rightly employed, and it would have been natural that he should have felt satisfaction at the success of his endeavour. But he seemed to have forgotten Trevor and his schoolfellows too, as he sat over his solitary fire, with his eyes fixed on the water-colour drawing which hung over his mantelpiece. "He was to have gone to the University," he said, half absently repeating the substance of the last words he had used before Trevor had left the room. "He was to have gone to the University, and to have taken orders. But he did not, and little has been heard of him in the world afterwards. Better so, better so. Honour and success, or a high sphere of usefulness, could never have been for me. I felt that when my life was spared after that long illness, and my feeling has never changed. I was saved from death to do this work; to warn others against the evil which shipwrecked me. God grant that I may be found at the last not to have laboured wholly in vain!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW BOY.

MORALISTS seem to be agreed in attributing to mankind in general, whatsoever the position or circumstances in life of each individual may be, an innate hankering after rank and station. "The man who says that he does not care for them," said Dr. Johnson, in the peculiarly blunt style wherein he was wont to express himself, "knows that he lies, sir." Possibly the good doctor as he said it, might have had in remembrance certain passages in his own career, and felt conscious that he had occasionally so "lied" himself. Whether the maxim holds good of all mankind, I do not presume to determine; but I can certainly aver that it held good so far as the White Brunswickers were concerned. To hear them talk, one would have supposed that every one among them could boast a pedigree as long as Sir Watkin Williams Wynne's, and as illustrious as that of the Bourbons. In particular, they were jealously sensitive as regarded the exclusive character of Dr. Brooksbank's school. No one was ever allowed to send his son there, they were wont to

affirm, who was, or ever had been, connected with trade. There were traditions current among the boys, which had descended from generation to generation, respecting wealthy citizens of London, or ironmasters in the North, who had offered the head master extraordinary sums to induce him to relax the strictness of his rule in their favour, but always without success. Not that the Brunswickers regarded Dr. Brooksbank as being insensible to the pecuniary allurements so held out: that was by no means their view of the matter. But they held that he was aware, if he once attempted such an outrage, the parents of his other pupils would immediately resent it by withdrawing them. "He knows better than that!" said Charley Rivers, one of the second-class boys—the son of Major Rivers, an old Peninsular veteran, who possessed little beyond his gentility and his half-pay—"he knows better than to attempt it. I am sure my father would take me away the next day, if Brickbats were to admit any snob into the school." "And so would mine!" said Gore, another second-class boy, whose father was a country apothecary of somewhat limited practice, though his son passed him off as an eminent physician. "And mine!" struck in Heath, who had his own reasons for always speaking of his respected parent as "Captain Heath," leaving it to be inferred that he held that rank in the Royal Navy, instead of being, what he was, captain and

part owner of a merchantman trading with Demerara. "And mine!" added Stapleton, the last of the group, and the one whose authority on such matters was held to be the gravest of any, seeing that he was the son of no less a personage than one of His Majesty's judges. "No, depend upon it Brooksbank will never attempt that—it would ruin his school if he did."

Yet, notwithstanding the confidence with which these assertions were made, it was curious to observe the uneasy feeling lurking in the minds of the boys, lest the head master should allow the lust of gain, after all, to prevail over the sense of duty, and induce him to overstep the prescribed limits. New boys were invariably subjected to a strict scrutiny as to their origin and antecedents, and lay under a species of social quarantine until the public mind had been fully satisfied on the subject. James Stapleton himself, the boy who, it will be remembered, had acted gratuitously as my medical adviser, whose authority was now received with so much reverence on such matters, had been for some time the object of general suspicion in his first half-year at Martin's Green. His father, a distinguished barrister, who afterwards attained to the dignity of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, had been appointed to the Common Serjeantcy just before Stapleton's arrival, and his son, who had heard a good deal on the subject at home, was much impressed by the dignity of his parent's

newly-acquired title. When, therefore, he was interrogated in the playground at his first appearance, according to the usual formula, "I say, you new fellow, what is your name, and what is your father?" he replied, promptly, "If you please, my name is Stapleton, and my father is Common Serjeant." "A common serjeant!" exclaimed Brackley, by whom the question had been asked, in mingled astonishment and disgust, "you don't mean that, young 'un, to be sure! Here, I say, you fellows, Nicolls, Jacobson, Dalison, Joyce—what do you think this new chap says? He tells me his father is a common serjeant!" "A common serjeant!" exclaimed Trevor—the son, by the way, of an old Indian general, who had lately returned, full of rupees and liver complaint, after thirty or forty years' broiling in the Presidencies, his thoughts reverting to the non-commissioned officers of his father's regiment, whom he had often seen pipe-claying their belts, or rubbing down their horses in the barrack-yard,—"that must be his gammon; Brickbats would never venture to let him come here, you know." "A common serjeant!" reiterated the others, as the image of the ancient veteran who came every Saturday to drill the junior boys, presented itself to their imaginations. "It's impossible! quite impossible! You must have made some mistake, you fellow, haven't you?" "No, I haven't!" retorted the new-comer,

angrily; "he was promoted only a few weeks ago. I wonder you did not hear of it. And my mamma is very proud of it, I can tell you, and so am I. He was a serjeant before; but he will rank above all the serjeants now—I heard mamma herself say so." "I never heard such a thing in all my life!" exclaimed Trevor. "I wonder what things are coming to! I wonder whether Brickbats will expect us to associate with a chimney-sweep next!" "I don't want to associate with you, I am sure!" said Stapleton, his face growing fiery red with indignation at this innuendo; "I don't believe your fathers are any of them better than mine, if as good; and I believe it is all envy and jealousy—that is more. I feel quite as *contemptible* as you do, I assure you." So saying, the new boy withdrew himself, like Ajax in the infernal regions, into impenetrable silence. The boys conferred among themselves after his departure as to the course which it would be incumbent on them to pursue under such unprecedented circumstances. Would a general sending to Coventry of the audacious intruder suffice to vindicate the character of the school? Hardly, it was thought. "If he had been a serjeant once, and had had a commission given him, as happened to a fellow in my father's regiment," remarked Trevor, "it would have been a different thing; though, no doubt, it would have been bad enough even then. But as it is,

a mere refusal to keep company with the fellow—that would not be half enough."

"Well," said Brackley, "what do you think of a round-robin to Brickbats, saying that we are sure he must have admitted him by mistake, and will send him away again, as soon as he has heard the truth?"

"He would flog us all round," said Dalison.

"No, he wouldn't!" interposed Heath. "I would write to my father, and tell him about it, if Brickbats attempted that."

"He would flog you before you could get an answer," returned Dalison.

"Ah, to be sure," said Heath, unable to parry this thrust, "he might do that. We had better send the round-robin without putting our names to it."

"What, an anonymous letter, eh?" said Trevor, rejecting this highly original view of a round-robin. "No, I won't have anything to do with anonymous letters. My father says no gentleman ever writes them. There must be some name to it."

"Well, then, I tell you what we can do," suggested Brackley; "one of us can sign it, in behalf of the others. I know my father often does that when he is the chairman of the magistrates at the Quarter Sessions, or of any public meeting. I have seen him sign his name, 'J. Brackley, Chairman, in behalf of the meeting.'"

"That is a very good idea," said Dalison. "We will call a meeting of the head forms in the school, and as you understand more about how it ought to be managed than any of us do, I propose that you shall be chairman."

"That would do famously!" said Joyce. "Don't you think so?" he added, turning to the other boys.

"Nothing could be better, I think," said Nicolls.

"Nothing," repeated Jacobson.

"It is a capital thought," said Trevor.

"Capital! capital!" was the general cry.

"Thank you, Joyce," said Brackley, rather hastily interposing, to put a stop to the general enthusiasm, "but I don't think I am at all qualified for the office, or else I should of course be willing to undertake it. It ought to be one of the head boys of the school—Jacobson, or Nicolls, or Trevor, or Dalison. It would be great cheek for me to put myself in such a position above all the first-class fellows."

"Why, you see," observed Jacobson, in answer to this suggestion, "Nicolls and I are going to leave so soon, that it scarcely signifies to us. Dalison, or Trevor, or Joyce—any one of them—would make a much more suitable chairman under the circumstances; otherwise I need not say, I should be quite willing."

"I am unluckily very much out of favour with Brickbats just now," said Dalison. "He would re-

gard anything I did of that kind with great prejudice, so that I should be a very unwise selection."

"And I am quite out of favour with him too," said Trevor.

"And so am I," said Joyce; and so said the others.

The office having been modestly declined by everyone present, the proposal fell to the ground, and a variety of expedients were suggested in its place. The boys were still hesitating between a joint reference of the affair to their parents and a general barring out, when their attention was happily diverted by the approach of John Woodley, a former pupil of Dr. Brooksbank, who occasionally rode down from London on half-holidays during the summer months, to take part in the boys' games. To him, as to a "Deus ex machinâ," the knotty question was referred. A hearty fit of laughter, which somewhat abashed his questioners, was the result. Woodley had recently been called to the common-law bar, and, as it chanced, had sometimes practised in the Common Serjeant's court. Their mistake, therefore, was at once explained to the boys; Stapleton was recalled from his self-imposed banishment, and elevated to a high position of honour, as much exceeding the consideration really due to his father's station in society, as the previous estimate had fallen short of it. But boys never do things by halves; and during the remainder of Stapleton's stay

in the school, nice points of precedence in respect of rank between the parents of the different boys, were always submitted to him, as to a Court of Appeal whose decisions were accepted as final.

Such being the state of feeling at Brunswick House, the reader may picture to himself the mingled amazement and wrath which took possession of the popular mind, when it was announced that the doctor had actually admitted a black boy into the school. "A black boy—a downright nigger!" so reported "Billy Waters"—who had happened to be in the parlour, undergoing some searching cross-examination by Mrs. Brooksbank relative to certain breakages of windows, when the new pupil arrived. At first, the boys were altogether incredulous as to the advent of any new boy at all, affirming that Billy—whose fondness for hoaxing was notorious—had altogether invented the occurrence. When at length the earnestness of his asseverations dispelled this idea, it was next suggested that he must be mistaken in supposing the individual in question to be black. "Perhaps he had a black handkerchief tied over his face, to keep off the cold," said one. "More likely the lady who brought him had a black page, and you mistook him for the new fellow," insinuated another. "Are you sure you saw his face at all?" inquired a third. "Perhaps he had black gloves and stockings on, and that made you think he was all black."

Billy endured the storm of objections manfully, and persisted in it that he had seen the boy's face; that he hadn't anything wrapped round it; that it was the new pupil and not a black page; and, lastly, that the boy, whoever he was, was not black in the face from coughing, as somebody had propounded, in despair of any better solution. The new boy hadn't any cough at all—at least, he hadn't heard him cough. He was a genuine nigger, as black as his hat, and so the boys would find.

In the midst of this Babel of conjectures and comments, the door opened, and Billy's veracity was vindicated to a considerable extent, if not entirely, by the entrance of the head-master, leading a short, punchy little fellow, apparently about twelve years of age, whose complexion, if it was not actually as black as Billy's hat (a very rusty old beaver, by the bye; Judge Stapleton, not unreasonably, having declined, some months before, to purchase an infinite series of new hats, which became invariably good for nothing after a fortnight's wear), was nevertheless many shades deeper in dye than a copper kettle.

"Boys," began the Doctor, in his most sonorous tones, "I bring you a new scholar and playmate,"—that was his regular exordium—"in whose behalf I particularly request your kindness and friendly offices. He is"—here the speaker paused a moment, as though he felt a slight embarrassment as to the best

mode of expressing his meaning—"he is a foreigner, you may perceive!" ["A regular nigger!" muttered Billy, half audibly, so that Brickbats caught the words, though fortunately he did not discover who had spoken]—"a foreigner, and, as such, more than commonly entitled to your generosity and forbearance. His father is a person of—of high rank in his own country"—"Overseer to a Yankee nigger-driver!" again suggested the incorrigible Waters; but, unluckily for him, this time the Doctor heard him plainly, and turning sharply round, caught him a ringing box on the ear, which propelled him in a slanting direction, like a billiard-ball, against Heath, from whom he cannoned off against Robinson, and all three boys coming into contact with a form, rolled over on the ground together. Brickbats contemplated the result of his stroke complacently: he felt that his dignity had been avenged, and withdrew in peace.

I am afraid that his exhortations to forbearance produced but little effect. The door had scarcely closed behind his portly person, ere the boys had crowded round the unfortunate stranger, plying him with questions innumerable, to which, either from inability or unwillingness, or perhaps the two combined, he made but brief answers, and those such as his hearers had scarcely expected. He came from a place a long way off; it had taken a long time, a great many months, to come to this country; and he

did not much like it now he had come to it. His mother was not a Hottentot, but an English lady, and his father was Rajah of Jesselpore—that was more; and his mother was not black, but as white as any of us, and her name was Johnstone—Mrs. Johnstone—and his name was Arthur Johnstone, and he would be obliged to us not to call him "nigger," nor yet "you fellow!" He hadn't been used to be called anything of the kind—he was used to be called "Sahib" or "your Highness," and he would thank us to call him so too.

I believe he was sorry before long that he had made that request, which I need not say was most scrupulously complied with. He was "Sahibed" and "Rajahed," and "your Highnessed," on all occasions, until he would have given every stiver of his pocket-money—though he wasn't over-fond of parting with it—if those words could be expunged from our vocabulary. As Trevor remarked—who was the best classical scholar among us,—it might be counted as one of the "vota numinibus exaudita malignis."

There was, in truth, a good deal more in the newcomer's manner to attract the practical joking of the boys than is ordinarily the case. His total ignorance of English habits, his strange appearance, and mode of expressing himself; above all, the violent fits of passion, which ridicule or rough usage rarely failed to

rouse within him, were strong temptations to his schoolfellows to amuse themselves at his expense, when they found the time hang heavily on their hands, as was not unfrequently the case.

I remember a scene of this kind occurring a few weeks after Arthur's arrival at the school. It was the day on which the cricket subscription for the season was collected, and a junior boy had gone round by order of the treasurer—that was Norton—to get the money in. It was paid without demur by the boys; who had no inclination to resist a demand sanctioned by long use, and trifling in amount, and who were further aware that if they did refuse, they would not only be compelled by Norton to pay, but would receive a receipt from him of a kind by no means to be desired. The new-comer alone had rebelled against the order; nor could argument, threat, or entreaty produce any effect upon him. The emissary at last, tired out and disgusted, was obliged to return to his principal, with the information that "Sahib" had flatly refused to pay any portion of the impost.

After his departure, the coterie of small boys, who had witnessed the interview with a mixture of awe and astonishment, began to question Arthur about it.

"I say, Sahib, do you really mean you won't pay the cricket money?"

"Yes, I do," replied Arthur.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't choose."

"And why don't you choose?" said Ellis, taking up the inquiry.

"I don't want to play cricket."

"That's no reason, Rajah," struck in Webber. "A great many of the fellows don't play cricket, but they all pay the subscription."

To this remark, which was not put in the form of a question, Arthur made no reply.

"I say," said Ellis, recommencing the discussion, and importing a new topic into it, "you'll find you'd better pay it. You'll get no end of a thrashing, if you don't."

"I don't care," said Arthur, "if I do. I won't pay it any the more."

"The fellows will all send you to Coventry; none of them will speak to you, that is to say, if you refuse," urged Webber.

"I don't want them to speak to me," returned the impenetrable Arthur.

There was another silence; and then the youngsters, perceiving that they had a young Yahoo to deal with, who was insensible to all considerations of civilized life, began to assail him with weapons of a different description.

"I'll tell you," cried Webber, "why Sahib won't pay the cricket money."

"Why?" asked another.

"He is saving up his money to buy a bottle of Rowland's Kalydor to wash himself white."

"No, that is not it," exclaimed Stevens, noticing the dark flush of passion which this taunt called into the boy's face; "that's not it. He is saving up his money to buy a brown wig and spectacles, for fear his master the nigger-driver should come after him, and find him out."

"Or, perhaps," said Ellis, "he wants to buy his freedom. How much does your master ask, Sahib—how much, eh?"

"How much, how much?" repeated the remorseless tormentors, dancing round him like the picadors at a Spanish bull-fight, jostling him from behind, twitching his hair, pinching his legs; always keeping carefully out of his reach, and singing as they buzzed round and round him the old rhyme, where with many and many an unlucky wight has been saluted before him,—

> Passion, Passion, take advice,
> Fill your pockets full of rice;
> When the rice begins to crawl,
> Take a spoon and eat it all.

Johnstone's face grew darker and darker with fury, as the shafts of his assailants fell thick about him. Suddenly, with a spring like that of a wild beast, he threw himself upon Tom Dickinson, who chanced at the moment to be nearest to him, fastening on his

throat with his teeth and nails, to the sore detriment of poor Tommy; who would have sustained serious injury had it not been for Frank Trevor's interposition. The latter had witnessed the skirmish from the schoolroom window, and now came forth, to put a period to it. With some difficulty he disengaged Arthur from his antagonist, and led him, still panting and quivering in every limb, to his own desk, in the corner of the schoolroom, whence he did not reappear until prayer-time that evening.

Now mind, I am not going to defend this kind of thing in schools. I have elsewhere spoken of the evils of bullying—that is, of the hardship and suffering inflicted by bigger boys on their juniors. The kind of petty badgering, falling short of this, but still tending to render their schoolfellows very unhappy, is in my judgment almost as grave a mischief. I know that it is urged by many that it is often a cure, and sometimes the only real cure, for affectation and sulkiness and morbid sensitiveness, and many other boyish faults. But, as was remarked in the other instance, though it may be sometimes a good thing for those who undergo it, it is always a bad thing for those who inflict it. To get into the way of looking out for the weak point of people's characters, in order to amuse ourselves with them, is about as mischievous an occupation as man or boy can find for himself. Many a one has failed in life who would otherwise have been

signally successful but for having acquired the habit in his school-days; and, what is worse, many a noble Christian character has been fatally stunted in its growth by reason of it.

Frank Trevor had interposed to protect Arthur against his small persecutors, as he had of late done once or twice before in the instance of other boys. He had resolved to keep in mind the recollection of the conversation which Mr. Winter had had with him, and the determination which he had formed in consequence of it. But he had already found out that he had undertaken no easy office; and Mr. Winter had given him some wise advice about it. "I don't want you to lecture the boys about bullying, Frank," he had said. "That isn't your business, and probably you would not do it with much effect, if you were to try it. But you may prevent a great deal by a little judicious management. A word here and there, spoken good-naturedly, will generally stop anything of the sort; and if anything more serious is attempted, say quietly you won't allow it to be done. If the boys know that you mean what you say, that will be in general quite enough." Trevor pondered over this advice after the other boys had gone up to bed that evening. Here was just such a case as Mr. Winter would like him to take up, but it was one in which he felt particularly reluctant to meddle. Arthur

Johnstone was a most unpromising subject to befriend. He would scarcely ever make any answer to questions put to him, even when there was no incivility shown in the asking. He fought shy of all the boys alike, whether they were in the habit of worrying him or not, and if any one pressed himself upon him, he ran the chance of getting it sharpish over the shins; for the boy kicked like a Cornishman, on the slightest provocation. This was not encouraging in itself, but there was another reason which rendered Trevor still more unwilling to interfere. This was, that he felt it would bring him into collision, not only with Joyce, who was for ever worrying Arthur, but probably with Dalison also. For the former he had no liking certainly, though they were old acquaintances and were thrown much together. With Dalison, however, he was very intimate. Many small ties, such as have already been specified, kept them together, and boys are always reluctant to break these. He felt strongly inclined to throw Arthur overboard as he reflected thus, but could not make up his mind to his own satisfaction. At length he remembered that it was getting too late for him to remain in the schoolroom, or he would not be in bed by the required time. Hastily determining, therefore, to be guided by circumstances as regarded his future dealings with little Johnstone, he went upstairs to bed.

CHAPTER V.

ARTHUR'S TROUBLES.

THE half-hour or so which intervened between prayers and the arrival of Mrs. Brooksbank, or her deputy, to take away the candles, was one generally dedicated to mischief of some kind. Sometimes it was a bolstering match, either a single combat or a general *mêlée;* sometimes an extempore dance, Sir Roger de Coverley being usually selected. On these occasions the gentlemen appeared in their ordinary attire (minus the shoes, which would have raised such a clatter over the Doctor's head, as would have brought even him upstairs to see what was the matter); and the *costume de bal* of the ladies consisted of night-gowns, put on over their other apparel, and fastened round the waist with a neckerchief or comforter, by way of sash; while the orchestra was represented by a boy playing on a Jew's harp, or, failing that instrument, a comb wrapped in silver paper. When neither "tourney nor dance" had sufficient attraction for the boys, they commonly took to teasing one another; and this mode of passing the time was more frequent in Dalison's room than in any

of the others: he being much given, as has been already intimated, to that species of capricious petty tyranny which boys call "bullying."

On the present occasion the popular fancy inclined to this method of diversion, Arthur Johnstone being fastened upon by general consent as the victim. Dickinson and his sympathizers were clamorous for vengeance on the perpetrator of the assault, the marks of which were still distinctly visible on the boy's chin and throat. Norton, who had had no opportunity of having it out with him respecting his refusal to pay the cricket subscription, was desirous of selecting the present opportunity as the fittest for that purpose. Joyce, too, had his secret grudge, which he wished to gratify, though he did not openly allege it. There was a junior boy in the same class with Arthur, whose timid demeanour and an occasional stuttering in his speech, when more than usually nervous, made him a favourite butt for Joyce's idle half-hours. A kind of fellow-feeling had sprung up between these two outcasts; and that morning Arthur had contrived with more dexterity than any one would have given him credit for, to deliver his fellow-sufferer from his tyrant's clutches. Joyce was amusing himself according to his usual practice, by making Gray repeat a string of words beginning with the letter W, and every time he stuck fast, which was on an average every third word, he

helped him through the difficulty by driving a kind of spur, composed of three long pins fastened to a stick, into some sensitive part of his body. The shock so administered generally released the imprisoned syllable from its bonds, much to the diversion of Joyce, but sorely to the injury of the sufferer; whose arms and legs were tattooed like those of a New Zealander by the oft-repeated process. As the elder boy was engaged in this Domitian-like entertainment that morning, he had chanced to seat himself with his back to the bookcase containing the school lending library. Arthur, who had watched the scene for a quarter of an hour with considerable, though useless indignation, had suddenly conceived a bright thought. Going silently out of the schoolroom, he had tapped at Mr. Winter's door, and begged him to lend him a book, the only copy of which he knew to be in the school library. Mr. Winter, in reply, had offered him his key of the school cupboard, to get the book in question out. But on Arthur's replying that he was unable to open the lock himself, the usher had good-naturedly gone into the schoolroom to unlock the door for him. As Joyce's back was turned to the bookcase, and he had no expectation that any of the masters would come in at that hour, he continued his torture of Gray for some little time after Mr. Winter's entrance; when the sound of the usher's voice caused him to turn round.

The former had apprehended, but imperfectly, what was passing; but his eye was fixed upon Joyce with an expression which made him turn first red, and then white, and, at last, hastily get up and leave the school-room. Joyce noticed, however, Arthur's expression of satisfaction at the success of his manœuvre; and at once divining the stratagem that had been employed, resolved that it should cost its contriver dear.

No sooner, therefore, had the boys assembled in their bedrooms, than he adroitly turned the conversation to the subject of the cricket subscription. It will be remembered that he had not been present when the money had been refused, and had only heard the circumstances from popular rumour, so that his question did not seem to have any direct reference to Arthur.

"Norton," he said, "when are the new cricket things going to be ordered? It is quite time. The weather was almost warm enough for a game to-day; and the old stock has run very short. I was looking it up yesterday morning. We must have a new batch of things before we shall be able to have a match at all."

"I would send for it at once," replied Norton, "I meant to have sent for it to-day; but I have not got all the money yet."

"Not got the money!" exclaimed Joyce, in affected surprise; "why there are as many fellows as usual in the school this half-year, are there not?"

"Yes, but some of the fellows can't pay all the money; and one won't pay at all."

"Won't pay at all! Who can that be, I wonder? A fellow ought to be tossed in a blanket, in my opinion, who refuses to pay the cricket money. That is the way we served a fellow five years ago, who wouldn't pay it, I remember."

"Hear, hear!" said Robinson; "who are the fellows that won't pay?"

"Willett, Saunders, and Dusautoy, say they will pay, as soon as they hear from home. Henderson has paid half; one or two others are a shilling short. Rajah Sahib is the one who says he won't pay at all," returned Norton. "I can't order all we want, until we have got all the money in."

"Rajah Sahib won't pay at all, do you say?" asked Joyce.

"No, he won't pay," repeated Norton. "Here he is himself. I say, why won't you pay, you young snob?"

Arthur screwed up his face into its most obstinate expression; but made no reply.

"Answer, will you?" said Joyce, "or I will shy this boot at your head."

"Answer, answer!" chorussed a dozen voices.

"Toss him in the blanket, as some one suggested just now," exclaimed Robinson.

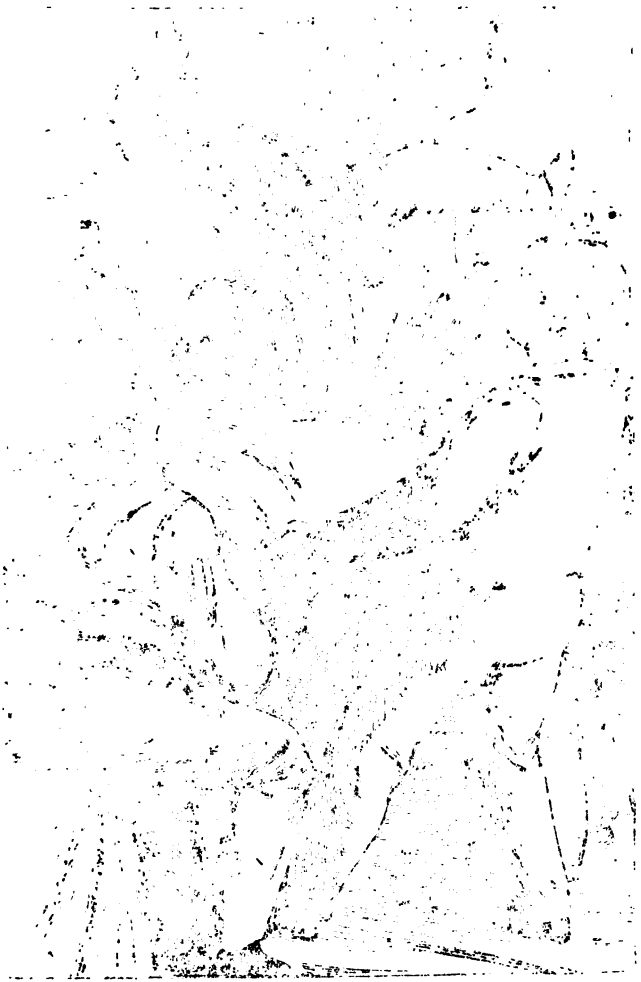
"Do, do! that will just serve him right," cried Rivers. "Now then, my lads, off with the blanket, and in with Sahib."

"Hurrah!" shouted the boys, always ready for this species of entertainment, and feeling the special justice of it in this instance. A blanket was soon torn from Arthur's bed; himself chucked into it, in spite of his struggles, in the course of which he bestowed one or two heavy kicks on his assailants' shins; and in two minutes more he was flying up to the ceiling, *secundum artem*, under the vigorous efforts of his persecutors.

While the hubbub was at its height, the door suddenly opened, and Trevor entered. He was on his way to his own bed, and still pondering over the difficult problem, which, it might be said, Mr. Winter had given him to solve; and hearing the disturbance in Dalison's room, had looked in, to see what was the matter. His entrance startled some of the boys, who, imagining that Mrs. Brooksbank had come upon them unawares, released their hold on the blanket, and the living shuttlecock flew off in a slanting direction, alighting breathless and enraged, but happily uninjured, on one of the beds.

"Up with him again," shouted the boys, as soon as they perceived that the alarm was groundless. "Up with him again. He hasn't had half enough yet!"

"Will you pay the cricket money, you young



The Flying Shuttlecock

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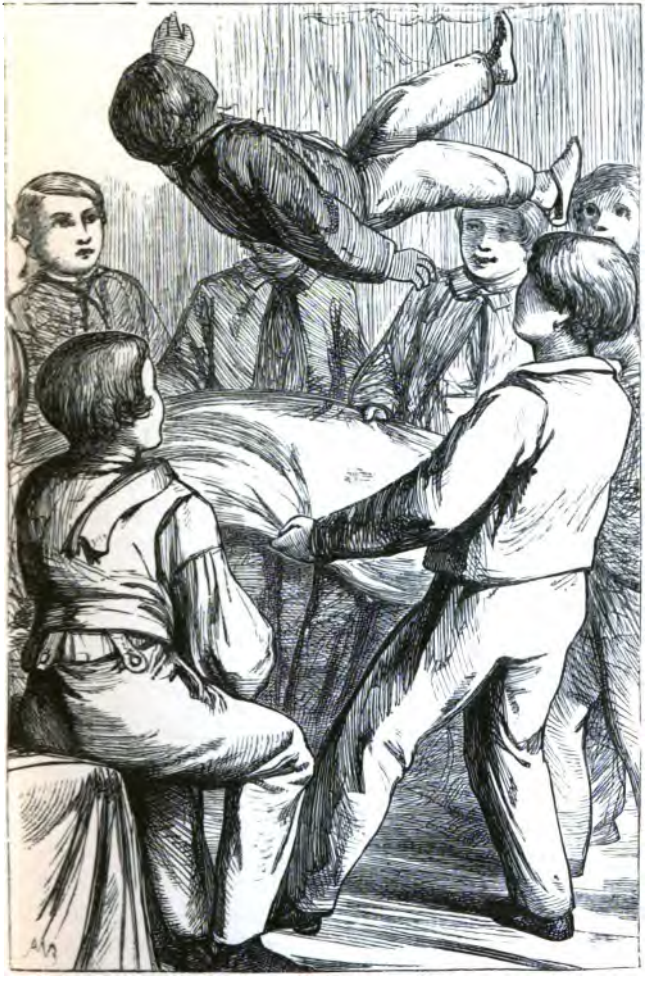


The living Shuttlecock. P. 71

wretch?" asked Joyce. "Say you will this minute, or I will pitch you into the blanket again, and no mistake about it."

"No!" roared Arthur. "I won't pay a sixpence; not if you kill me for it; I won't, I tell you! Let me alone!" he bellowed, as the boys again seized hold of him. "Let me alone, I say," struggling as he spoke, with such energy, as to enable him to break loose from his captors, and fling himself at Trevor's feet, which he clasped with frantic eagerness.

"Oh! Trevor! don't let them," he exclaimed. "You are kinder to me than the rest. Don't let them drive me mad in this way! They are all bullies in this room. Don't let them, pray!"

Frank could not help being moved by this appeal. With the recollection of Mr. Winter's injunction still fresh in his mind, he felt it to be impossible to resist it.

"Come, I think he has had enough, has he not?" he asked, looking round him, and glancing more particularly at Dalison, who had sat throughout the scene on the end of his bed, watching what was passing, but taking no part in it. "I wouldn't toss him a second time if I were you. He might be really damaged."

Trevor was popular with the boys; and besides, an appeal to their mercy rarely failed to soften them.

"Well, I don't mind letting him off now, if the others don't," said Rivers.

"I don't want to toss him again, so far as I am concerned," added Robinson.

"Let him pay the cricket money, and I have no objection," observed Joyce, rather stiffly, for he was annoyed at Trevor's interference.

"But that's just what he won't do," cried Norton.

"Well, then, I am for tossing him again, till he does," said Joyce. "I am for tossing the sulks out of him, whatever Trevor may think about it.'

Trevor bent over Arthur. "Would you mind giving me the money?" he asked, in a low voice.

"No," answered Arthur in the same tone, after a moment's hesitation, "I will give it you, though I would not to a bully like Joyce."

"There," said Trevor, turning round to the others, "he has promised to pay the money; so you will let him off now, as a favour to me, won't you?"

"To be sure! By all means! Certainly!" was the cry from all sides. Joyce alone did not join in it.

"I overheard what he said, Trevor," he remarked, angrily, when the others were quiet, "and I have a good mind to give him something for his impudence, which he will like still less than being tossed in the blanket. I don't know what business you have to come in here, interfering with our room. But if you

do choose to take this young snob up, you had better advise him to give me no more of his sauce, or he may find your protection won't prevent him from getting his deserts."

"Won't it?" retorted Trevor, provoked at Joyce's language. "We'll see about that when the time comes. As it is, I don't see what right you have to make a row. Dalison, and not you, is the head boy in this room, and if he doesn't object to my coming in here, you have no right to. And as for what Arthur said, he didn't mean you to hear it, so it was no impudence that I can see."

Joyce, who was much irritated, would have replied in the same strain, but at this moment Mrs. Brooksbank's step was heard, as she slowly ascended the stairs, and the alarm was instantly given. Trevor vanished through the opposite door. The boys flew right and left to their beds. Trowsers and stockings were peeled off with the rapidity of a pantomimic change; and when the old lady entered the room, every boy was not only in bed, but wrapped apparently in the serenest slumber.

Well, that was the beginning of Trevor's patronage of little Johnstone. You see it was in a measure forced upon him, after what Joyce had said, even if his mind had not already been made up on the subject. Arthur was removed at his request to the desk

next to his in school; and into his room, instead of Dalison's. It made a great difference to the boy every way. Frank helped him in his school work so much that he got on very tolerably with the ushers, instead of being in continual disgrace; and the boys gave up their hitherto constant practice of bullying him—partly out of regard for Trevor, and partly because he did not any longer exhibit such violent outbursts of anger as he had been used to indulge in. All might have gone well but for Joyce, who never forgave him. He was a good hater, and took care that Arthur should suffer severely for the vexation he had sustained through him. Nor was Dalison better pleased, though he repressed for the present his displeasure. If Mrs. Brooksbank's entrance on the night of the blanket-tossing had not put a stop to the quarrel, he would have answered Frank in a manner which would probably have made an open breach between them. As it was, a hollow show of friendliness was still maintained between them; but each had an instinctive feeling that something would in all likelihood occur before long to interrupt it.

Such proved to be the case. One afternoon, about a month before the close of the half-year, a group of four were engaged in practising bowling and batting, preparatory to a great match to be played shortly with the Martin's Green Eleven. The four players were

Dalison, Gore, Heath, and Joyce, the two former bowling, and the other two handling the bat. Half a dozen or more juniors had been impressed to watch out. Amongst others, a youngster named Simpson, and Arthur Johnstone, had been obliged to act as the two long-stops behind the wickets. Something had that morning occurred which did not tend to the improvement of Dalison's temper. This was the information contained in a letter from his father, that he had applied to General Trevor, asking his influence to obtain a writership in the East-India Company's service, in preference to the promise of a cadetship, which was all that he had hitherto been able to secure for his son. But the interview with the General had not fulfilled his anticipations. Mr. Dalison knew that Sir Henry Trevor had invited a large party of young people, as usual, to pass a fortnight at his country seat during the holidays; but he had not extended the invitation this time to George. He had further spoken rather coldly and doubtfully as to his ability (that is, according to Mr. Dalison's view of the matter, his willingness) to push George's interest. He half suspected, he said, that some coldness must have arisen between young Frank Trevor and his son. But he meant to make another trial next week; before the appointment he was asking for had been given away. In the mean time, if there had been any quarrel with

Frank, his son must by all means make it up without delay. Dalison was a good deal provoked by this letter. He was too acute not to know that any overtures addressed to Frank, under the circumstances, would be more likely to provoke his quondam friend's contempt than his good will. His best chance of success, he felt, would be to leave things altogether alone, and trust to his not injuring his cause at all events, if he did not assist it. He would know the issue of his father's second appeal to the General in a few days, and if the latter *did* altogether refuse,—why Trevor would perhaps find out that he had learned the fact.

But though he kept his thoughts carefully to himself, his secret dissatisfaction showed itself in very evident outward symptoms. His style of bowling was always swift, but he bowled that day faster than usual, and got provoked that the long-stop repeatedly let the balls by. Simpson was in truth not much experienced in long-stopping; and the bowling was so rapid and irregular, that a much better player than himself might have been pardoned for failing to stop it. Dalison at first went no further than abuse and a cuff or two, when one or two balls in succession slipped through the boy's fingers. But his temper was more and more roused, as every successive ball was missed; and at length, calling Simpson up, he gave him several sharp boxes on the ear, and desired

Arthur Johnstone to change places with him. This arrangement, however, did not tend to soothe Dalison's irritation. Arthur was sulky in the first instance at being obliged to watch out against his will, and still more sulky at being obliged to change the easier post for the more difficult. He soon grew superlatively sulky at the angry objurgations which Dalison now transferred to him, whenever he failed in stopping his balls. At last he broke out into one of his fits of passion, such as he had not indulged in for several weeks past, and declared that let Dalison say what he might, he couldn't stop the balls, and it was of no use his trying.

"Sulky little brute!" said Joyce, as he witnessed this outbreak, "I'll soon cure him, if you leave him to me, Dalison. Just bowl a little to leg, and I'll send him a ball or two, which he will have some excuse for not stopping."

Dalison complied, and Joyce hitting sharp round to leg, struck two or three balls with all his force, which narrowly missed Arthur. Dalison and Heath laughed as they watched the effect of this proceeding on the young Indian; who, immovable as he was on most occasions, was fairly frightened by the force and noise with which the balls flew past him, and which, if they had struck him on the temple, would not improbably have killed him.

"I say," whispered Gore, who was standing close to Joyce's wicket, "hadn't you better mind you don't really hit him? There'd be an awful row if he was seriously damaged. And, by Jove, here is this nigger's friend, Trevor, coming up. He will kick up a row, as sure as fate, if he sees it."

"I don't care what Trevor says or does either!" returned Joyce, angrily. "I have a right to hit round, haven't I, if Dalison bowls leg-balls? I can't help it, if this young stupid can't stop them, or get out of the way. Bowl away, Gore, and don't trouble yourself about me—I'll manage all that, you may rely on it."

Gore shrugged his shoulders and went on with the game; and presently Trevor, who was returning from his walk, came up, and stood for awhile to watch the practice. He did not appear at first to perceive what was going on, and it was not until one or two balls had passed close to Arthur's person, one of which indeed struck him, though very slightly, on the thigh, that he called out to Arthur to move farther off.

"You are too near," he said, "Arthur. If Joyce is practising hitting round in that way, you ought to be further off. You might be hurt very much there."

Arthur was only too glad to comply, and was moving back, when Joyce called to him to stop.

"I say, you young villain, if you don't stay where

you are, I'll come and knock your head off with this bat."

"You will knock his head off with that *ball*, I expect," said Trevor, "if he does stay where he is. He ought not to be placed there, Joyce, and you know it."

"What business is that of yours?" returned Joyce. "You are always meddling with what doesn't concern you. This fellow is fagging out for us, and not for you. He shall stand where we please."

"Where *you* please, I suppose you mean!" said Trevor. "No one would think of putting a little fellow like him so near the wicket, and cutting those slashing balls round at him, but you. You have no right to do it, and you shan't. Arthur, move ten yards further back. I will take care he shan't thrash you for doing it."

"Take that, at all events!" shouted Joyce, striking round again as he spoke, and this time with a more successful aim. The ball struck the boy between the shoulders as, in compliance with Trevor's directions, he was moving further off, and brought him to the ground like a ninepin.

Trevor ran and picked Arthur up, who was much bruised and in great pain. He was immediately joined by Gore, who, though by no means blameless as regards the article of bullying himself, was shocked at so

extreme a piece of brutality. "Joyce is a horrid beast, I must admit," he said. "It is a shame to bully fellows as he does. Shall I help you to take him indoors?"

"Thank you, Gore," said Trevor. "If you will be so kind as to see him safe inside the house, and take him to Mrs. Brooksbank, that will do. He can walk by himself, though not very well. I should like to go and have this out with Joyce."

So saying, he turned round and walked up to the latter; who, somewhat disturbed by the success of his last hit, though not at all penitent, had now joined Dalison and Heath at the further wicket. "Joyce," he said, abruptly, "I wish you to understand once and for all, that I won't have you bully little Johnstone in the way you have been doing for the last two or three weeks. I am determined to prevent it."

"Indeed!" returned Joyce, emboldened by the presence of Dalison. "And pray how will you prevent it?"

"If you attempt to thrash him again, I shall interpose to stop you."

"In fact you mean you will try to thrash *me* if I do?"

"Well, yes," returned Trevor. "I don't wish anything of the kind, unless you force it on me. But I *will* try it, sooner than allow him to be bullied in that disgraceful manner."

"I don't know what right you have to say that Dalison and I were bullying him disgracefully."

He looked appealingly at his ally as he spoke; but to his surprise and discomfiture Dalison only replied, "You had better not bring in my name, if you please. I don't wish to have anything to do with this business."

"Nor do I wish to mix you up with it, George," said Trevor. "It was Joyce whom I saw slashing round at him, and trying to knock him over if he could; and it is only Joyce with whom I am concerned."

"Very well," said Joyce, sulkily; "I am sure I wish to have as little to do with you as you can with me. As for young Johnstone, it will be time enough for you to talk of interfering in his behalf, when I do anything to justify it. He is the most impudent young snob in the school; and if he is impudent to me, I shall lick him, whether you like it or not." And so saying, Joyce retired towards the house, covering his retreat, or we may say his defeat, as well as he was able. The other boys followed more slowly, Dalison rather cool and silent, and thinking to himself that if it had not been for his father's letter, it would have afforded him very particular satisfaction to have taken down Trevor's insolence (or what he considered as insolence) a peg or two; and that not impossibly before many days had passed, he would have the satisfaction he desired.

CHAPTER VI.

TABLEAUX VIVANTS.

AS Gore entered the house, partly leading and partly supporting Arthur Johnstone, they encountered Mr. Mayhew, who was setting out for an evening walk. This master I have described as being neither so severe as Mr. Rawdon, nor so considerate as Mr. Winter, and holding in consequence a sort of middle place in the boys' regard. He seldom took notice of what passed out of school hours; partly, no doubt, because he did not wish to give himself more trouble than he was obliged to take; and partly, we must add in fairness to him, because he really believed that interference during their play-hours was generally unwise. He was about to pass the two boys without remark, when it suddenly struck him that Johnstone not only looked dogged and sullen, as was not unfrequently the case with him, but that he appeared, from some cause or other, to be so weak as scarcely to be able to put one foot before another. His compassion was moved.

"Why, Johnstone," he said, "what is the matter? Are you ill, or have you met with an accident?"

"He has been hit by a cricket-ball, sir," said Gore, anxious to anticipate Johnstone's own story, which might perhaps disclose too truly what had really taken place.

"Hit by a cricket-ball!" returned Mr. Mayhew. "You must mind what you are about, Johnstone, and not go too near when a match is being played. What match has been going on this afternoon, Gore?"

"No match, sir; only some of us have been practising together, and Johnstone offered to stand long-stop to Joyce, Dalison, and one or two others."

"I didn't offer," growled Arthur; "you made me."

"*I* didn't make you," said Gore, quickly.

"If you didn't, the others did," returned Arthur.

Mr. Mayhew internally blamed himself for his folly in meddling with the matter, and endeavoured to extricate himself.

"Well, if you were only standing long-stop, Johnstone," he said, "you could not be very much hurt. None of our boys bowl so hard that you need be afraid of their balls. Face them boldly; that is the way to learn cricket."

"I shouldn't mind the bowling," said Arthur; "the ball that hit me was struck from a bat."

"I thought you said you were standing long-stop!

"So I was; but Joyce hit round at me."

"Hit round *at* you? Hit round, I suppose yo mean. He didn't try to hit you, I imagine?"

"Yes, he did," returned Arthur, in the same ton as before, regardless of the winks and nods which Gore who was standing a little behind Mr. Mayhew, directe at him. "Yes, he did; he hit round at me, I dar say a dozen times, before the ball struck me. Trevo was there, and you can ask him if you don't believe me."

Just at this moment Dr. Brooksbank entered the house on his return from riding; and Mr. Mayhew, who felt that the matter was too serious for him to pass over in silence, related what had transpired to his principal.

The Doctor was much moved. "I have several times fancied," he said, "that there was a good deal of bullying going on this half-year, and that the first-class boys were the chief offenders. I shall certainly inquire into this. Where is the boy I saw just now? Gore, was it not? Did I understand you to say he was present?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Mayhew, "both he and Trevor were present, according to Johnstone's account. But Gore seems to be gone."

This was true; that worthy having taken the

opportunity of Dr. Brooksbank's entrance to decamp, taking Johnstone with him.

"But," added the usher, "here come Trevor and Joyce;" and, as he spoke, the two boys named entered the passage, followed at a little distance by Dalison.

"Stop, if you please," said the head master, as the three were about to pass on, "here is something which requires explanation. Arthur Johnstone has told me, or rather he has told Mr. Mayhew, that you have been obliging him to stand behind the wicket, and have hit balls round at him to try and knock him down. Is that so, Joyce?"

"I hit round to leg," replied Joyce, evasively, "and it happened to hit him, no doubt. He ought to have got out of the way."

"*Happened* to hit him, Joyce? I asked you whether you *tried* to hit him. Have the goodness to answer my question."

"I don't know what right any one has to say that I tried to hit him, sir," returned Joyce. "When a ball is bowled so much to leg as the one I struck, there is always a chance of its going near the long-stop. He ought to have stopped it, or got out of the way."

"You mean, then, that it was an accide' 7 Mr. Mayhew, however, tells me that Johnstone complained of your having hit round at him a

dozen times running, trying to knock him off his legs, and he adds that Trevor knows about it. Whether he was a party to it or not, I do not understand."

"I had hit several times to leg," replied Joyce, in the same tone as before, "but that was because the balls were so bowled. As for Trevor, he had better tell his own story."

"I will question him, for it is plainly no use to inquire of you. But first, who was bowling to you?"

"Dalison, sir," said Joyce.

"Dalison! Where is he?"

But Dalison had prudently followed Gore's example, and walked quietly off, as soon as the Doctor began questioning Joyce.

"Well, then, Trevor," resumed the head master, "you, I find, were present, though I do not understand what part you took. Have the goodness to tell me how far was Johnstone standing behind the wicket?"

"About the usual distance of a long-stop, sir."

"No nearer?" asked the Doctor, with a slight frown.

"I have seen a long-stop as near," said Frank, anxious if possible to spare Joyce.

"Hem! that hardly accords with what Mr. Mayhew

told me. Do I understand you to mean that you think the boy might have stopped the balls, or got out of the way, if he had tried to do so?"

"I think a practised hand certainly could," returned Trevor, "and perhaps Arthur might, if he had been very sharp."

"'Perhaps?' and 'if he had been very sharp?' That is, if the boy had not been very young, new to the ways of the school, and ignorant of the game. You must know that that would make the whole difference; and what would be harmless then, is wanton cruelty now. I am sorry to hear so lame a defence of such conduct from you, Trevor. I should have hoped you would have acted differently. You may go, sir."

Trevor's cheek flushed with indignation, but he could not vindicate himself without accusing his schoolfellow; besides, if he were now to detail all that had passed, it would seem like a retractation of what he had advanced. He turned away without a word, and as he entered the house took his first bitter, but salutary, lesson in that school in which all who would do God's work must study; which teaches that honest efforts to resist evil in others are sure to be met, at the very outset, by calumny and discouragement. If any who have undertaken the better part, expect that their motives will be understood, and

their acts approved, by the world, they most entirely deceive themselves. The advanced servant of his Master recognizes in the efforts made to thwart or malign him, the genuine stamp of the Cross; but it is hard for a beginner, like poor Frank, to do so. Nevertheless, he recovered himself after a minute or two, and resolved bravely that he would stick by Mr. Winter and poor little Arthur, let who might misjudge him.

The Doctor now called Joyce up, who had been standing at some distance, and had not heard the conversation between himself and Trevor.

"Joyce," he said, "I would fain believe that you did not intend seriously to injure the little boy; but your conduct is both cowardly and cruel. You will confine yourself to the playground, sir, for the next fortnight; and, if I hear of any repetition of such tyranny, I shall send you away immediately from my school."

So saying the Doctor pursued his way into the house with a dignity of port and step which, on that occasion at least, became him well. He had meant to do justice, and believed he had. He was, in truth, a kind-hearted and right-minded man; and if not as earnest and anxious as one in his position should be, was, at any rate, in advance in these respects of the schoolmasters of that day. It is not unlikely

that he was wont sometimes to comment on the low standard of duty which his predecessors had acted on, and would have been greatly surprised if he could by anticipation have heard, how the next generation would speak of *him*. Perhaps a similar revelation of the future might do us, in the present day, no harm.

There was one individual among his hearers, at all events, who did not share the good Doctor's complacent view of his proceedings, but who judged him probably more unfavourably than the severest critics of the succeeding age could do. This was Joyce, who was greatly annoyed at the sentence of confinement to the school precincts, and still more at the instrumentality by which this punishment had been brought about. He would have openly revenged himself upon Trevor and Johnstone if he had dared; but as the former was his equal in strength and skill, and his superior (he well knew) in courage and spirit, he would, in all probability, have got the worst of any encounter with him. And as for Johnstone, it was clear that he could not reckon upon his keeping back from the masters anything that it might suit his convenience or humour to tell them. If he tried to pay him out for his impudence, as Joyce considered it, by any act which could be traced personally to him, he would have to

undergo the penalty wherewith Dr. Brooksbank had threatened him; and that, he was fully aware, would be a very serious injury to him. Nevertheless, he was resolved that, come what might, he would make both Trevor and Arthur smart for the part they had taken against him. After carefully watching for a considerable time, an opportunity of indulging his malice presented itself.

There was, in the school library, a book which contained a description of the manners and customs of the Hindoos, illustrated by some very elaborate coloured engravings. Among them was one representing the idol Juggernaut, seated, in all his hideousness, upon his shrine, and arrayed in gorgeous attire; while the Brahmins were depicted as offering sacrifices on an altar before him. It had chanced that one of the boys showed the picture to little Johnstone, with the *bonâ-fide* idea, I believe, of obtaining some explanation from him respecting its details which the boy himself did not understand. But the moment that Arthur's eye rested upon it, he exhibited such extreme disgust and alarm, that the boy who had shown it to him was at first astonished, and then diverted, at what he regarded as mere affectation. One or two of the boys, who were witnesses of the scene, were equally amused, and the story was a good deal talked about in the school for

a day or two, after which it was displaced in popular favour, and was soon forgotten again.

But it had reached the ears of Joyce, and he resolved to make use of it whenever occasion might serve. The outline of the scheme he had laid out for himself, was to induce Dalison to take up the cudgels against Trevor, and punish his impertinence by practising some annoyance on Arthur. If Trevor resented this, or attempted to prevent it, a personal quarrel with Dalison would ensue; and in that case Frank would probably get a severe thrashing from Dalison, who was more than a match for Trevor, both in respect of strength and skill. On the other hand, if Trevor made no attempt to prevent Dalison from annoying his *protégé*, that would in itself be a great humiliation, which Joyce would thoroughly enjoy. Further, even if young Johnstone should make a complaint to the masters and any punishment should ensue, it would alight, he cunningly reflected, on Dalison, and not on him. But his great difficulty in the execution of this design lay in the strange demeanour of his associate. Dalison had hitherto always been willing enough to join in any of the petty persecutions which he was in the habit of devising against the juniors; and in particular, had seemed to find unusual amusement in the annoyances practised on Arthur. He was also, as Joyce felt well assured, considerably

provoked with Frank Trevor, who for some time past had not only gradually withdrawn himself from companionship with his old crony; but had repeatedly said and done things which were, in effect, reflections upon him, if not actually intended to be so. Dalison was not, in general, the kind of fellow to put up with this. All that Joyce could extract out of him, however, when he urged these topics upon him, was a sinister smile and a significant shake of the head.

One day—it was the last, by the bye, of Joyce's imprisonment,—the first class were preparing their morning lesson, previously to the arrival of Dr. Brooksbank; and Dalison and Joyce, having completed their tasks, were chatting carelessly together, when the latter took the opportunity of telling his companion of the exaggerated and absurd horror which Johnstone had exhibited at the sight of the Juggernaut's picture. "I never saw such an impudent ass as that young nigger is," he exclaimed; "it would be good fun, as well as be serving him right, to make him go through the whole ceremony of offering sacrifice to Juggernaut. I'll be bound he has seen it often enough in India. I'd make him do it, whether he liked it or not, if I had my way."

"You would have some difficulty in doing that, I expect," said Dalison; "he is the most obstinate

young rascal I ever saw. I believe he'd sooner be licked black and blue than do it, even if—"

"I *would* thrash him black and blue," said Joyce, interrupting; "but what were you going to add?"

"I was going to say, even if Trevor did not interfere to stop it."

This was said with apparent indifference of manner, but inwardly Dalison chuckled over the vexation which he knew it caused his auditor. As he had expected, Joyce instantly broke into an angry expression of his feeling.

"Trevor be hanged, Dalison; I can't think what has come to you that you tolerate his impertinence, as you have done for the last month past. I should no more have thought he would have dared to affront you, as he has been doing, without your resenting it, than that—"

"Than that you yourself *would* resent the affronts he has been offering to you, eh?" remarked Dalison, coolly, as Joyce paused, uncertain how to finish his sentence.

"You know why *I* don't resent it," returned Joyce, sulkily; "you know Brickbats has threatened to expel me, if I get into any further row."

"Oh, ay; I know all about it," said Dalison, in the same tone as before. "Frank would be sure to complain to Brooksbank if you were to thrash him,

wouldn't he? But never mind, here come the letters; we shall have time to read them before the Doctor comes in. Ha!" he muttered, in a lower tone, to himself; "the governor's hand. This is *the* letter, then! Now then, Master Frank, we shall see what you have been about."

The letter, apparently, was not a very long one, and there was time to finish its perusal before Dr. Brooksbank's arrival. Dalison folded it up, and put it into his pocket without a word of comment; but any one who knew him well would have seen at a glance that its contents were extremely unwelcome to him. He went through the lesson, however, without any outward manifestation of his annoyance; and it was not until school had broken up, and he and Joyce had retired to the farthest nook of the playground, that he gave any hint of his altered frame of mind. Then he said, abruptly—

"Joyce, you wish to mortify Trevor, and pay Johnstone out, for getting you into a row, don't you? There, say yes or no, man, if you want me to help you in doing it. No shilly-shallying. I hate all that!"

"Well, yes, I do," replied Joyce, startled into sincerity by Dalison's abruptness.

"Good—well then, the afternoon is going to be wet, and we shall be kept in-doors. Propose what

you suggested about Juggernaut this morning, and I will back you."

Accordingly, when the boys, prevented from pursuing their out-door sports, were lounging idly about the schoolroom, prepared for any mischief which might be suggested to them, Joyce proposed that they should divert themselves with *tableaux vivants*—using for the purpose the costumes belonging to the theatre, which the boys were always allowed to open during the winter half-year. There was a deep embayed window at the farther end of the schoolroom, over which hung a curtain, let down and drawn up by a pulley. By closing the shutters of the window, as good a frame for *tableaux vivants* was formed, as could well be imagined. The idea seemed to promise well, and the boys leaped at it, like trouts at a May fly. A Babel of voices was almost instantly heard suggesting all kinds of subjects and costumes, classical and mediæval, English and foreign, ancient and modern, possible and impossible, in the most glorious confusion.

"Brutus killing Cæsar," cried one.

"Wellington and Blucher after Waterloo," urged another.

"Robin Hood and Friar Tuck," shouted Billy Waters.

"What do you think of Cromwell cutting off

Charles the First's head?" asked Norton, whose ideas of history were somewhat confused.

"I should like Achilles selling Hector's body to Priam," said Trevor, who was of a classical turn of mind.

"The Field of the Cloth of Gold," proposed Rivers.

"The Temple of Juggernaut," suggested Joyce.

"Gently, gently," said Dalison; "don't all speak together. We can have 'Brutus killing Cæsar,' no doubt; but the costumes would be all Roman togas, and that wouldn't look well. As for 'Wellington and Blucher,' we ought to get up the Field of Waterloo, with a lot of cannons and dead bodies, and horses, and all that."

"Well, if you come to that," said Heath, "how could you manage the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold?' There ought to be no end of splendid tents, and that sort of thing."

"Or how," said Brackley, "could you manage the beheading Charles the First? There ought to be a great crowd of people about, and we haven't an axe among the properties, either."

"Well, then," said Dalison, "there is only 'Robin Hood and Friar Tuck,' is there?

"Or the 'Temple of Juggernaut,'" interposed Joyce.

"Oh! ay; the 'Temple of Juggernaut,'" repeated

Dalison, "that would look well, I dare say; but how could we manage that?"

"We have a dress in the property-box that is just like the robe which Juggernaut is represented as wearing in the Indian book," said Joyce.

"Oh! yes," said Billy Waters, "so there is; and the old throne, with a curtain thrown over it, would make a good seat for him."

"And one of the high stools would make a capital altar," said Heath.

"That will do famously," exclaimed several voices.

"Let us see the dress and the book, at all events," suggested Dalison.

The cloak, which was of a bright yellow material, ornamented fantastically with red and black ornaments, being the same in which one of the juvenile performers had last winter enacted the character of a magician, was brought out and compared with the picture of Juggernaut. It was found to agree very fairly; and a head-dress was also extracted from the stores, which, though not very like that of the real Hindoo idol, was judged to serve the purpose sufficiently well. Roman togas and Turkish turbans, with a few emendations, made what was accounted a very suitable costume for the Brahmin priests; and now it only remained to arrange the stage and apportion the parts.

"Who'll be manager and scene-shifter?" asked Dalison.

"I, I, I!" exclaimed several of the boys together.

"Very well, Rivers, you shall be stage-manager, and you, Joyce, shall be scene-shifter, and draw up and let down the curtain. Now, who's to be Juggernaut?"

"Billy Waters," shouted a chorus of voices.

Billy gracefully acknowledged the compliment, and, yielding to the general wish, assumed the robes of Juggernaut.

"And now who's to be high priest?" inquired Dalison.

"I," and "I," and "I," "Heath," "Brackley," "Trevor," "you yourself, Dalison," responded a dozen boys at the same moment.

"No, no!" exclaimed a voice, "it ought to be Rajah Sahib; he knows all about it, and can tell us how it ought to be done."

"That is a capital idea," exclaimed Dalison; "where is Sahib? Go and fetch him, some one. He'll do excellently. It ought to be a little fellow, you see, because of course he ought to be smaller than Juggernaut. Dickinson, Ellis, and Webber shall be priests, and Sahib high priest. Won't that do?"

A general shout of applause bore witness to the

popular approval, and several of the bystanders commenced an immediate search after Arthur.

"I don't think he will do," said Trevor, addressing Dalison and Stapleton, in a low voice, "I advise you to choose some one else."

"Certainly, if you wish it, Frank," said Stapleton, "I don't mind, I'm sure."

Dalison, however, took it differently.

"Won't do? why not?" he asked, in a tone which all around him could hear.

"I don't think he would like it," returned Trevor, in a more constrained manner.

"Why shouldn't he?" asked Dalison, "it will do him no harm, will it?"

"I should think not, indeed," said one of the bystanders.

"If he refuses, it will only be because he's sulky," remarked another.

"I vote we make him do it, willy-nilly," cried a third. "He is the sulkiest little beast that ever came to Martin's Green."

"Dalison," said Trevor, annoyed at these remarks, "I put it to you as a personal favour not to make Arthur Johnstone do this, if he doesn't like it. I think it is a shame, and I must fairly say so."

This observation was not judicious.

"I don't see what business it is of yours," growled one or two.

"I shall make it my business," retorted Frank, sharply.

"Oh! come," said Joyce, "we can't be dictated to in this way. I, for one, won't stand it, and if Stapleton doesn't choose to act Juggernaut, I will. Oh! here 's Sahib at last. Now then, you young beast, do you hear what you are to do? You are to put on that dress which you see there, and that turban, and stand in front of that stool, in the same attitude as the figure in this picture. If you refuse, or make any fuss, you will get as sound a walloping as ever you had in your life. Do you hear what I say?"

The boys in general, and Dalison and Joyce in particular, had been prepared for an outbreak of passion; but they had not anticipated such a transport of fury as this intimation called forth. The boy shook from head to foot, as though seized with a violent fit of ague; and his face, instead of growing dark purple, as was usually the case when he was excited by anger, became perfectly livid, as he looked at the preparations for the *tableaux*. His struggles were so violent that two of the biggest boys were unable to hold him; and, escaping from their grasp, he rushed up for the second time to Frank Trevor, and clung with the energy of despair round his knees.

"Come, none of that, youngster," exclaimed Joyce, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise, "Leave go there, or it will be the worse for you.

We'll soon see who is master here!" And as he spoke he stepped up to Arthur, with the evident intention of tearing him away from Trevor's knees, regardless of the expression of the latter's face, which intimated a strong disposition to resist his interference.

"Joyce," he exclaimed, as he approached, "I advise you to leave Johnstone alone. I don't want to quarrel with you; but I won't suffer this."

"Do you mean you will prevent me from taking him away?"

"Yes," rejoined Trevor, "touch him at your peril. Once and for all I won't see him bullied."

"Bullied, Trevor?" said Dalison, coming forward as Joyce paused for a moment, embarrassed, as it appeared, by Frank's reply. "Do I understand you to call Joyce and me bullies?"

"I have still less wish to quarrel with you than with Joyce," returned Trevor, calmly; "we are old friends, though we have been cool of late, and I don't want to say anything offensive. I only ask you to leave Johnstone alone."

"You have not answered my question," replied Dalison, coldly; "do you retract the word 'bully,' as applied to Joyce and me?"

"No," retorted Trevor, haughtily; "I did not apply the word directly to you; but I think what you want to do to Johnstone *is* bullying, and I shall not retract my opinion."

"Then you will just take the consequences of your impertinence," said Dalison, coolly stripping off his coat, and approaching his adversary as he spoke. "Now then, do you mean to stand up to me like a man, or am I to thrash you at my leisure?"

Trevor made no reply; but, disengaging himself from Arthur, he too took off his coat, and stepped out to meet his antagonist.

"No, no!" exclaimed Brackley, interposing; "don't you two fellows quarrel—at all events, not to-day; just recollect that Monday is the only whole holiday for the rest of the half, and that we are to go down the river and have a jolly lark; and if you two fellows, the two head boys of the school, fight, Brickbats will be certain to forbid our going. I can't see that there is anything to fight about; but, anyhow, put it off till after Monday."

"Very well," said Dalison, as coolly as before, "we will put it off till Monday. Take away Juggernaut's robes and throne for the present. On Monday evening, in the long room, Trevor, we will settle this. Either you ask my pardon and cease to interfere between Johnstone and us, or you have as good a licking as I ever gave a fellow in my life."

"I have no objection to make," said Trevor, and, taking Arthur by the hand, he left the schoolroom.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UGLY VISITOR.

I SUPPOSE I need hardly say that there was plenty of talk among the Brunswickers about the fight which was to come off between Dalison and Trevor. I don't believe that anything else was talked of for ten minutes together, during the whole of Friday and Saturday—notwithstanding that the programme of Monday's proceedings had been made known, by authority, to the boys on the evening of the former day. None of them had any doubt but that Frank would lose the battle, and probably be severely punished by his antagonist besides.

"He hasn't a chance with Dalison," said Brackley, who was discussing the affair with Charlie Rivers and Stapleton on the Saturday afternoon in a corner of the playground. "He hasn't the ghost of a chance, I tell you. Why! look at that fight with Bullface. He was three inches taller than Frank, and I'll be bound three inches wider across the shoulders; he was twice as strong as Trevor, and a plucky fellow into the bargain. And yet you saw

what a milling he got from Dalison. It is nonsense in my opinion, for Frank to try to stand up to him. He had better give in at once, that is my opinion, and that is what I should advise him to do."

"He won't do that," said Rivers; "I have no more doubt than you have, that he will be tremendously thrashed; but he'll go on as long as he can stand. He is a gentleman born and bred, and Bullface was only a snob, though I agree with you, he was a plucky one. I prophesy Trevor won't walk off the ground as he did."

"More's the pity," said Stapleton; "Frank's as good a fellow as ever came to Martin's Green, in my judgment; and if he did want to prevent that poor miserable little Sahib from being bullied, it was nothing but kindness. I think it a great shame of Dalison to take it up as he has done. I heard Trevor tell Dalison that he did not wish to offend him in any way."

"It is all that Joyce's doing," said Rivers. "He put Dalison up to it, I know. If the fight were to be between Frank and Joyce, I shouldn't so much care."

"No," said Brackley, "nor if it were between Dalison and Joyce; I shouldn't for my part object to see that."

"I should think not," observed Stapleton, "but

e may wait a long time before we shall see that, I
xpect. But seriously, don't you think something
ight be done to prevent the fight from coming off?
don't mean by advising Frank to knock under. I
gree with Charlie that nothing would induce him
o do that. But something else might be thought of."

"Would you suggest to Dalison, that *he* should
ive up his intention of obliging Sahib to take his
part in the *tableau?*" asked Brackley, with a slight
arcasm in his tone.

"That is nonsense," said Rivers. "Everybody
knows that he wouldn't do that, unless it happened
to suit his own purpose—no, not to please his own
father! And it is plain, for some reason or other,
that he has some spite against Frank, which he wishes
to gratify. But I agree with Billy, that we might
try to do something. Do you think that, for instance,
we could keep this young chap Sahib out of the way?
If he wasn't there on Monday evening, Dalison could
not of course compel him to dress up and all that;
and then there would be no pretext for interfering
with Frank.

"That is not a bad idea," said Brackley, "and I
confess it had not occurred to me. Yes, if he would
ask leave to go to bed immediately after the boys
returned from the water, Dalison could not get hold
of him, until the next day at all events."

"The next day would not signify," said Stapleton. "The long room is open only on Monday evenings; and on the Monday after next they will begin to get it ready for the examinations. So if Sahib could be kept out of the way for that one evening, the whole thing might blow over."

"Well, perhaps it might," said Brackley; "at all events it is worth trying. Just go and fetch young Johnstone here, Rivers, there's a good fellow; we'll try what we can do with him."

Charlie complied, and after a quarter of an hour's search, found the boy in question in a corner of the school-room, sheltered as much as possible from general observation behind one of the desks. He made no demur to accompany Rivers; who, next to Trevor, was the boy who treated him with the most kindness.

"Well, Rajah," began Brackley, as soon as he saw him, "so you know, I suppose, that Trevor and Dalison are going to fight on your account?"

Arthur put on his sullen face, as soon as he heard the word "Rajah;" and Rivers, who saw that Brackley had made a mistake in so addressing him, hastened to interpose.

"Trevor has been kind to you, has he not, Arthur?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the boy, his face clearing again; "he has been very kind to me always."

"And you would be sorry to see him severely hurt?"

"Yes, of course."

"And you would try to prevent it, if you could?"

"I don't know what you mean," replied Johnstone.

"Well, what we mean is this," said Brackley: "Dalison intends to make you put on a particular dress on Monday evening, and act the part of a Hindoo priest in the *tableau;* and Trevor has declared that he will interfere to prevent it. Now, if they do fight, Trevor is sure to get much the worst of it, and will probably be very much hurt. We want to prevent them from fighting, and believe, that if you keep out of the way, there will be no row."

"If Dalison attempts it, he will get the worst of it," interposed Johnstone.

"The worst of it?" returned Brackley; "that is nonsense. He is far more than a match for Trevor."

"He will get much the worst of it," repeated Arthur, with flashing eyes.

"Why, what do you mean, Sahib?"

"Never mind what I mean," returned the other, doggedly; "I tell you Dalison and Joyce will get the worst of it, if they attempt it."

"Well, but, Arthur," said Rivers, "would it not be better to avoid the chance of a row altogether? If you will merely ask Mrs. Brooksbank leave to go

to bed as soon as we come home from the party on Monday, there will be no fuss at all. You can say you are tired, or something of the kind, and she will be sure to let you. That is all we want you to do."

"You surely won't refuse to do that," urged Stapleton, noticing that the boy made no reply.

"Yes, I do," returned Arthur in the same tone of dogged obstinacy he had used before, "I do refuse. I tell you Dalison and Joyce will repent it if they persist in bullying me, or hurting Trevor. I won't shirk out of their way, or ask Mrs. Brooksbank leave to go to bed. Let them do what they like, and take the consequences. I don't care."

"There, take yourself off, you young wretch," exclaimed Brackley, much disgusted. "It was a great mistake to have anything to do with a young Hottentot like that; we must give the thing up. If Trevor chooses to set Dalison at defiance, and Dalison is determined to thrash Trevor, we can't help it."

"Well, I don't quite agree with you there," said Stapleton. "I shall make another attempt, though altogether of a different character. I shan't meddle with Sahib again, I promise you. By the bye, I wonder what he could have meant by saying that Dalison would get the worst of it."

"He meant nothing, I expect," said Brackley, "except that he was in a great rage with Dalison, and wanted to pay him out if he could. But what do you mean to try, Billy, yourself?"

"Well," said Stapleton, "I shall try to get Hiems to ask Frank to tea that evening. I think I could manage that. And it will not much signify, you know, whether Dalison and Joyce persist in making young Johnstone do what they want, so long as Frank isn't there to interfere. I must confess I shouldn't be over sorry, after what we have heard, if that young savage did get a good licking, provided Frank didn't suffer by it."

"Nor I," said Brackley, and Rivers likewise subscribing to the same sentiment, Billy proceeded with his usual astuteness to put his scheme into operation. He first waited awhile to see whether Johnstone's nerves would not be shaken by the preparations which were being made for the ceremony of Monday evening; which showed that Dalison was determined to persist in the programme he had laid down. In accordance with this, he had ordered the "long-room" to be prepared for Juggernaut's sacrifice, and had removed thither the throne, the altar, and the various robes and other properties necessary for its due representation. This long chamber, by the by, was a low attic running the whole way over the school-room. It had

once been used as a dormitory; but Dr. Brooksbank had found it so difficult of management, that he had, early in his occupation of the premises, built an additional wing to his house, and removed thither the beds. The room was now used by the boys for various purposes. On the occasion of the public examinations, as has already been intimated, it was employed as a convenient place, where the various candidates could be placed sufficiently widely apart from each other, to preclude all possibility of copying from one another. During the winter months it was converted to the purposes of a theatre; and on Monday evenings during the summer season, the boys were allowed to assemble there for any legitimate purpose which might happen to occur to them. Hither it was that Dalison had caused the various theatrical properties to be conveyed, which would be employed in the *tableau*, the performance of which he and Joyce had fully resolved to insist upon. Well,—Stapleton waited awhile to see how Johnstone would take the preparations made by Dalison's order, for the accomplishment of the purpose which he had declared he meant most certainly to carry out on the Monday evening, after the business of the day was over. But the sight of the preparations produced apparently no kind of effect on their intended victim; unless indeed a more determined fit of obstinacy

could be regarded as such: and Billy Waters was obliged to fall back on the scheme, which he had already propounded to Brackley and Rivers. This he accomplished, as he flattered himself, with some cleverness. He went to Mr. Winter on the Monday morning, and asked whether he would allow him to examine a book of prints; which Trevor had seen, as he had been told, on the occasion of one of his visits to that gentleman's study. Receiving a ready assent from the good-natured usher, he inquired further whether Trevor also might be allowed to come, and see it again. Mr. Winter presuming that Stapleton had preferred this request, in consequence of Trevor's wish to that effect, gave without hesitation the required permission; and finding that the evening of the same day was the time which would suit them best, invited them to come at that time. Billy forthwith informed Frank thereof, representing it as a regular invitation to tea. Trevor was somewhat annoyed, but having no suspicion of the trick which had been practised, and no reason at hand for refusing, was obliged to reply in the affirmative; and it was agreed that he and Stapleton should go to Mr. Winter's room, as soon as they returned from their expedition that evening. Billy obtained a good deal of credit with Brackley and Rivers for his ingenuity, as the three boys met together in the hall of Brunswick House, prepared

to set out on their party of pleasure. Perhaps the reader may think that the credit was not very well deserved, seeing that it was obtained by means which were anything but honest. But the result did not at all accord with Billy's expectation; as indeed is generally the case with people who prefer a cunning mode of doing things, to honest straightforward dealing.

Boys, however, are seldom inclined to be very rigid critics on such subjects, and they are still less likely to be so on such occasions as the present. It was a bright, glorious summer day; the very day for such a party as theirs. They were to go down the river in a large row-barge, specially hired for the purpose, to a gentleman's park a few miles distant, who had allowed Dr. Brooksbank the use of his grounds for the occasion. There they were to have dinner on the bank, and after that to run wild in the woods, picking flowers, and hunting for eggs, or amusing themselves with games the whole afternoon. How should boys under such circumstances remember anything but the delights of the passing hour? It was not until they had all returned, sated with pleasure, though still untired (for whatever does tire boys?), and had talked over the various incidents of the day, that the recollection of Sahib and his unconsummated sacrifice occurred to any one. But after

an hour had been devoted to the discussion of a variety of interesting topics—how Rawdon had nearly tumbled into the river, as he was trying to hand Miss Brooksbank out of the barge, and what a game it would have been if he had; and how Philips and Dunbar had found a rabbit dead in a trap—at least they said it was dead—and had got leave to bring it home and have it for supper; and how a lot of fellows, while playing at hide and seek, had come upon a nest of adders, and had nearly been bitten, only they ran off, and told the other fellows; and how Heath and Gore and Robinson had fallen in with a gang of gipsies, and had their fortunes told, and had been presented with a live hedgehog, which they meant to keep (unlucky beast!) in a box in the school-room—after an hour had been passed in talking over these and the like matters, Stapleton and Trevor were summoned by one of the boys to Mr. Winter's room; and not long afterwards Dalison and Joyce entered the playground in search of Arthur Johnstone; who, it seemed, was nowhere to be found. Brackley at first imagined that Sahib had, after all, taken his advice, and was keeping judiciously out of the way. But this soon proved to be a mistake, for, on entering the long-room to complete the necessary preparations, they discovered the boy seated quietly on a box, looking his very darkest and sullenest, but not

evincing the least symptom of fear or hesitation. He had found his match, however, as regarded obstinacy of purpose, in Dalison.

"Oh, you are here, are you?" he exclaimed, as his eye fell upon Arthur. "Where is Trevor, I wonder?"

"He is taking tea with Hiems," said one of the boys. "I saw him going with Billy Waters into his room about half an hour ago."

"Oh," said Dalison, with a sneer. "Well, that is lucky for him perhaps; but it does not signify to me. Well, we must lose no time in settling this matter. It is later, I see, than I had thought. Put on Juggernaut's robes, Joyce, and we will manage the rest in two minutes."

Joyce complied in silence, and was on the point of ascending his shrine when he was stopped by Dalison.

"No," he said; "wait a moment; let Johnstone put on his dress and take his place first. Now, you young whelp, you understand what you are to do, and you had better set about doing it without more bother. Do you see that dress there? Put it on at once."

"I won't," said Arthur, doggedly.

"Won't you? we'll see all about that. Here, you fellows, take off his trousers and shoes while I hold him, and then put the others on him."

Johnstone resisted with all his might, but it was vain for him to struggle against Dalison's grasp. The change of costume was soon effected by himself and Heath, and they were proceeding to drag the exhausted boy up to the altar, when Trevor suddenly entered. Billy's scheme had broken down unexpectedly. Mr. Winter had been engaged to take tea with Dr. and Mrs. Brooksbank, and had only sent for the boys to look through the portfolio of prints, which Stapleton had asked to see. This did not occupy above half an hour, and as soon as they had been all examined, Mr. Winter had dismissed his guests.

Frank entered at an unfortunate moment. Dalison and Heath were dragging Arthur across the room, and Joyce was on the point of mounting to his eminence. His arrival was altogether unexpected, and Heath, startled by it, let go his hold on Johnstone, who broke loose from Dalison and took refuge, not this time with Trevor, but in a corner of the room behind some boards, whence it would be very difficult to dislodge him. The boys, baffled for the moment, turned their attention to Trevor.

"Here comes the champion," exclaimed Joyce, with a mocking laugh. "Now, Dalison, look out for yourself, or you will be chawed up before you know where you are."

"No, no," said Brackley: "don't let us have any quarrelling. Frank, it is nothing but a bit of fun. I don't believe Sahib himself would care a bit about it, if he was only asked, instead of driven to do it. Here, Arthur, come out, there is a good fellow, and don't get Trevor thrashed," he added in a lower tone, which the boy addressed alone could hear. "No one will hurt you, and it is nothing but nonsense."

To the surprise of everybody, Arthur at once complied with their request, and came out from his retreat, with a scowl upon his face, it is true, but without any attempt at resistance. He was walking quietly up to the altar, when Joyce, who was disappointed as well as astonished at this bloodless issue to the fray, again interposed.

"Well, come, that is a good one too! So, Trevor, you have advised meek and patient submission to your pet, have you? Very prettily behaved indeed, and very wise into the bargain!"

"Rather different from what he said last Thursday, I must say," observed Heath, "hey, Dalison?"

"Rather," said Dalison; "but people think better of it sometimes. Would you like to come a little nearer, Trevor, and then you will see that he does it correctly?"

"You need not be insolent, Dalison," exclaimed Trevor, his face growing crimson as he heard these

taunts. "I was sent for by one of the masters, or I should have been here to prevent what you have already done to Johnstone; and now I warn you to bully him no more."

"You mean to fight me, then?" inquired Dalison.

"I mean to prevent you from bullying Johnstone, if I can."

"That comes to the same thing. Well, if you like to have a good thrashing first, and see Johnstone offer sacrifice afterwards, instead of seeing him do it at once, I'm sure I have not the least objection."

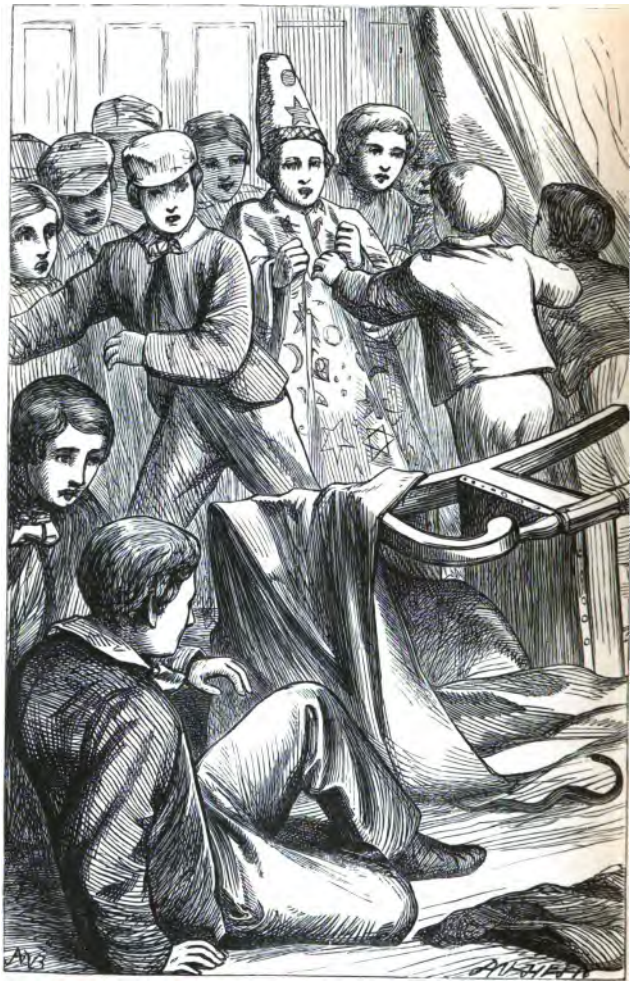
Brackley and Stapleton again attempted to interfere, but without producing any impression on either party. The combatants stripped off their coats, and a ring was formed. As every one had foreseen, Trevor proved no match for his stronger and more skilful antagonist. But his pluck and resolution protracted the fight longer than any one could have expected; and when he was at last obliged to succumb by a heavy blow on the head, Dalison's face exhibited some very evident symptoms that his victory had not been gained without severe punishment. The boys looked on almost in silence, and without any of the eager interest which they usually showed in such encounters; and at its conclusion Brackley made another attempt to induce Dalison to push the thing no further.

"There, Dalison," he said, "you have gained the day. Frank can't resist you any longer. Won't that be enough, without making the poor little beggar do it?"

A slight applause followed this speech, which had the effect of provoking still further Dalison's irritation. His was not one of those tempers that are satisfied with success; and the pain of the blows and the obstinate resistance with which he had been met, only roused him to greater anger.

"No," he exclaimed, savagely, "it won't do, Brackley, and that is all about it. Don't you interfere;" and again stepping up to Arthur, he seized him by the collar, and began, with Heath's help, once more to drag him towards the altar.

Arthur had stood by during the fight, with the same expression of face, which he had worn from the moment when they had discovered him in the room, —an expression so peculiar that, if the attention of the boys had not been drawn off to other matters of interest, it could not have failed to engross it. It was not fear, and it scarcely seemed to be anger; but rather dogged and resolute expectation of some unforeseen and disastrous result. He made no resistance, but walked quietly by Dalison's side to the required spot, and the next minute Joyce would have assumed his seat, if a strange and unexpected incident had not intervened.



The Sacrifice of Juggernaut. P. 123.

[illegible] still [illegible] against the [illegible] Wames, who had [illegible] scarcely [illegible] his [illegible], and was [illegible] weak to interfere further in Arthur's [illegible]. Joyce, as he passed him, could not forbear a [illegible] which was scarcely heard by the boy himself, but [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible].

"Shame! shame!" was the general cry, and [illegible] was [illegible], which obliged him to step hurriedly [illegible] side, or he would have been thrown down by [illegible] assailants. In doing so he came sharply into collision with the chair, which, covered with [illegible] cushions, stood ready for Juggernaut's [illegible] and it was overturned on the floor. [illegible] and amazement broke from the boys. [illegible] shawl had been dislodged by the fall, [illegible] fields a live adder of the largest size [illegible] itself, which, as though sensible of the presence of enemies, was now writhing and hissing on the floor. The boys stared for a few moments at this strange and alarming spectacle. Then a general rush to the door followed; and in two minutes the snake, the Indian boy, and Frank Trevor, who was still too much exhausted to be sensible of what was passing, remained the only occupants of the apartment.

Sacrifice of Ingrement.

Trevor was still leaning against the shoulder of Billy Waters, who had been his second in the battle. He had scarcely recovered his consciousness, and was too weak to interfere further in Arthur's defence. Joyce, as he passed him, could not forbear a taunt; which was scarcely heard by the boy himself, but roused the indignation of the bystanders.

"Shame! shame!" was the general cry, and a rush was made, which obliged him to step hurriedly on one side, or he would have been thrown down by his assailants. In doing so he came sharply into collision with the chair, which, covered with shawls and cushions, stood ready for Juggernaut's reception; and it was overturned on the floor. A cry of horror and amazement broke from the boys. The uppermost shawl had been dislodged by the fall, and from its folds a live adder of the largest size had disengaged itself, which, as though sensible of the presence of enemies, was now writhing and hissing on the floor. The boys stared for a few moments at this strange and alarming spectacle. Then a general rush to the door followed; and in two minutes the snake, the Indian boy, and Frank Trevor, who was still too much exhausted to be sensible of what was passing, remained the only occupants of the apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

IT was a regular panic, such as sometimes takes possession of men as well as boys. The whole posse, amounting perhaps to thirty or forty fellows, ran at full speed down the long-room stairs, tumbling, in their haste, over one another, and making no pause until they reached the school-room; where the rest of their schoolfellows, astonished in their turn at such an irruption, crowded up to ascertain the cause.

For a few minutes nothing was heard but a medley of voices, each relating what had occurred, and offering all kinds of suggestions, possible and impossible, without paying the slightest heed to what anyone else might be saying.

At last, the turmoil quieted down so far, that some of the elder boys were able to make themselves heard.

"There can be no doubt," said Brackley, "that Johnstone put the viper under the shawl. He must have brought it home with him out of Sir George's woods."

"Yes," said Rivers, "I remember seeing him with a basket on his arm as we were coming home. He said he had a lot of moss in it."

"And I saw him going to the place where we found the adders," said Middleton; "I remember, when I told him that we had come upon a lot of them, that he went off in that direction, though I did not think anything of it at the time."

"Oh, it must have been Sahib, no doubt," said Heath; "no one but he would have thought of bringing such a thing home."

"Or of putting it to bite one of the fellows," added Gore.

"Of course," said Dalison, "there can be no earthly doubt that he brought the viper home, and put it where it was found; and no more doubt, I should think, that he put it there intending it to bite Joyce or me. But the question is, what is it best for us to do?"

"I think we ought to tell Brickbats," said Brackley. "I hate telling things to the masters as much as anyone can; but this is a different matter altogether from a school row. A fellow's life isn't safe unless this young savage is sent away."

"Hear, hear!" said several voices.

"Well," said Dalison, "I own, for my part, I don't see the good of telling Brickbats; at all events, not till the end of the half-year. Johnstone is scarcely

likely to attempt anything of the kind a second time before the holidays; and when we go home, we can get one of our fathers to write to old Brooksbank. But if we tell him now, there will be no end of fuss, and bother, and inquiry; and he'll be giving us an awfully long prose, and perhaps a punishment into the bargain."

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Rivers; "we can tell Mr. Winter. He'll advise what is best for us to do, and we are always safe with him."

"Well, for my part," said Joyce, "I'd rather tell Brickbats than Winter, if I must tell one or the other. Winter would give us a prose an hour long, which is three quarters of an hour longer than Brooksbank would."

"No telling the masters, I vote," said Gore.

"I second the motion," said Dalison.

"I say ditto to you," said Heath.

"Very well," said Brackley, "have it so, if you like it; only just be good enough to remember, that we can't leave Sahib and his viper to play any tricks they please upon us."

"No," said Stapleton; "I should think not, indeed. I have no fancy for finding the gentleman in my bed to-night, if he—that is, if Sahib—should happen to take any offence with me. I declare I shan't sleep a wink for thinking of it."

"To be sure," said Charlie Rivers; "we must take it away from him. Even if he did not mean anyone harm, the brute might crawl into a corner, and bite some one unawares. And talking of that, by-the-by, where is Frank Trevor? I hope he has not been left up in the room there by himself."

"I am afraid he must be," said Brackley. "I suppose he must have been too weak to come with us, when we chivied. He would be here, of course, if he hadn't stayed up stairs."

"Well, then," exclaimed Rivers and Stapleton, in the same breath, "we ought to go at once and look after him. For my part," added Rivers, "I had no idea he had been left there, or I would not have come away without him."

The rest of the party assenting, the suggestion was at once acted upon; but when the boys arrived at the foot of the long-room stairs, they found that the door which led to them was fastened inside. They knocked several times, and tried to force the door open, but without success. They then shouted to Frank through the keyhole, but received no answer.

"I say," said Brackley, "this is serious. Of course, Johnstone must have bolted the door; and who knows what he may have been doing to Frank all this time?"

"He wouldn't hurt him," said Joyce, with some-

thing of a sneer in his tone; "he is too great a favourite of his for that."

"I wouldn't answer for that," said Norton; "when fellows like that get into a regular rage, they don't mind whom they hurt. I recollect, a week or two ago, I tried to take away a sort of brass locket, or bullet, or some such thing, which he wears hung round his neck by a chain,"—

"Oh, ay! I know it," said Rivers; "he showed it me one day. But it is gold, not brass; it is some kind of charm, I believe, which he told me once his father had given him. It was chased and carved in a strange outlandish manner; and so was the chain, too."

"Gold or brass," said Norton, "I didn't want to steal it, but only to look at it—he might have known that. But he flew into such a fury the moment I attempted to touch it, that I thought he would have run me through with Middleton's big knife, which was lying near him. And he would have run Middleton through as well, merely for laughing at him, if Tommy hadn't snatched the knife up, before he could lay hold of it."

"Well, never mind that now," said Brackley, "the thing to be done is to get Frank out of his clutches. I vote we try to break the door down."

"Well, we can try," said Gore; "but it is very strong, and I expect we shall have a difficult job."

A hammer and screwdriver, which had often been used to open the boxes and desks of the boys, who chanced to have mislaid their keys, were now fetched; and a dozen of the strongest among the bystanders pushed with all their force, but the door remained immovable.

"Is the window bolted?" inquired Joyce, as they desisted from their efforts. "If it is not, we can get in from the roof of the shoe-house. I got out that way one day last summer, when I happened to be locked in; so of course it would be possible to get in that way. Run round, Middleton, and see."

A renewed effort was made during Middleton's absence, but with as little success as before. In a minute or two Tommy returned with the information that the window of the long-room was not only unfastened, but was standing wide open. This occasioned some surprise.

"I am pretty sure it was not open when we were in the room," said Joyce.

"I am quite sure it was not," said Dalison. "I recollect shutting it, when we first went in, and it was not opened afterwards."

"Well, anyhow, we can get in now," observed Brackley. "Let some one go round and try."

Half-a-dozen volunteers for this service were on the point of setting off, when steps were heard slowly

descending the long-room stairs. The boys stood still in breathless expectation. Presently the door was unbolted, and Frank Trevor appeared. He seemed still weak and faint, and clung to the banister for support.

"Hurrah!" shouted Stapleton, as he came in sight. "You are all right, are you not, Frank? You have not been bitten?"

"Bitten, Billy, what do you mean?" answered Frank; "who should there be to bite me?"

"Where's Sahib?" asked another boy.

"I don't know, I am sure," exclaimed Trevor, more surprised than before. "Isn't he with you? I know nothing about him. And I can't think what could have made you fellows leave me alone in the long-room, as you did. You might have waited till I had come to my senses, at all events."

The boys endeavoured to explain; but they were in such a state of bewilderment, and interrupted each other so incessantly, that Frank could make nothing of the business.

"Why, Frank," exclaimed Rivers, suddenly, in a tone which arrested everyone's attention, "what have you got there fastened round your neck?"

"Round my neck!" said Trevor, "nothing, that I know of, except my watch-chain." As he spoke, he put his hand into his vest, and, to his own astonishment, drew forth a gold-embossed chain, having a

curious ornament, something resembling a locket, attached to it. "Why, what can this be?" he exclaimed; "where does this come from? I never saw it before in my life, that I remember."

"I have seen it, though," said Rivers. "It is the very ornament you were talking about, Norton. It belongs to young Sahib, and he always wears it round his neck."

"Yes, that is it," replied Norton, "I should know it among a thousand."

"What can have become of him?" cried Joyce, his face and tone alike expressing considerable uneasiness.

"We had better go upstairs and see," said Dalison, quietly. "We must find him as well as the viper, and then we can talk about what is best to be done."

The boys agreed to the suggestion, though not without some inward trepidation, and ascended the stairs in a body. They peeped through the keyhole, and, perceiving nothing, cautiously opened the door; half expecting Arthur to rush out upon them with some weapon in his hand, or to have the adder thrown, hissing and furious, among them. But the room was silent, and seemed to be empty. A few anxious glances satisfied them that this was the case, and then the whole throng of boys poured in. Arthur was gone, and had, to all appearance, taken the snake with him. At least, after the closest search, no trace could

be discovered of either. The open window suggested the mode of exit, and it was now remembered that the boy had his hat with him, when Dalison and Joyce had found him in the long chamber.

Arthur was gone, beyond a doubt; but whither, and for how long? Those who had taken the principal part in his persecution were greatly alarmed, and wished heartily, as boys generally do after bullying one another, that they had left him alone. They would have concealed all knowledge of what had occurred, but that was impossible. There remained now scarcely ten minutes before they would be summoned to prayers, and then of course Johnstone's absence must be discovered. This short interval was employed in a hurried search of Arthur's bedroom; a corner of the schoolroom to which he was wont to resort, when anxious to avoid the pursuit of his schoolfellows; and finally, of Mr. Winter's study (from which that gentleman was still absent), in the forlorn hope that he had taken shelter there. But all quest was vain, and the boys were at length obliged to assemble in the schoolroom for prayers, without any addition to their information on the subject. Before Dr. Brooksbank came in, however, the resolution already agreed upon, of observing entire silence as to the circumstances which had preceded the boy's departure, was renewed; Dalison and Joyce adding in the hearing of all, that they would thrash

any junior within an inch of his life, who gave the slightest hint as to what had occurred. Presently the Doctor arrived, and Arthur's absence was of course discovered. Slowly and unwillingly the boys admitted that he had come home from the water-party with the others; that he had been seen half an hour afterwards; that he had now disappeared, no one knew whither; they had been engaged for the last hour in trying to find him; and lastly, that he was certainly nowhere in Brunswick House.

Much alarmed, Dr. Brooksbank immediately sent out messengers in various directions, to make inquiries of the neighbours; Mr. Winter volunteering to conduct the search. After his departure, the head master proceeded to inquire with greater minuteness into the circumstances more immediately connected with Arthur's disappearance.

"Who was last in his company, I should like to know?" he asked. There was no response. "I insist upon the boy who was last in his company coming forward. I shall be sure to find out who it was from other sources; and it will prejudice that boy much, whoever he may be, if he attempts to hide himself. Let him step forward now."

After another pause the crowd opened, and Frank Trevor stepped out. He had been doubting whether Dr. Brooksbank's challenge applied to him, since, though he had been literally, so far as he knew, the

last in his company, he had been wholly unconscious of the fact. The Doctor noticed his hesitation, and, as his eye fell on Frank's swollen cheeks and blackened eyes, a frown of displeasure gathered on his forehead.

"You, Trevor," he said, "you mixed up in a matter like this! Ha, I remember now, you were one of those whom I was obliged to reprove for harshness to this very boy, not a fortnight ago. And the state in which your face is, shows that you have been engaged in some discreditable quarrel. But I have no time to inquire into that now. Were you the last person with Johnstone, before he was missed?"

"I believe I was," answered Trevor, in a constrained voice, for he was hurt at what he felt to be injustice.

"You *believe* you were—I wish you would answer plainly. Do you *know* that you were the last?"

"Yes," said Frank, "I have learned that it was so."

"Do you know, or can you surmise, the reason why he has run away?"

Trevor coloured painfully.

"Perhaps I can," he said at last, in a low tone.

"What was it?"

There was no answer.

"What was it, sir? This is too serious a matter to be passed over, as a slighter offence might be. I insist on your telling me."

"I do not think I ought to be obliged to say," replied Trevor, rather haughtily; for his indignation was roused at finding the Doctor's anger levelled a second time, without sufficient reason, at him.

"Very well, I cannot make you answer. But from your language and demeanour, and present appearance, as well as from my recollection of what occurred a fortnight ago, I cannot but draw a very unfavourable inference. You will go to bed at once, sir; and I need not tell you you will receive no prize when you leave, unless this is fully explained."

Frank obeyed without a word of remonstrance. His heart swelled at the injustice he had received, and he resolved to write at once to his father, and beg of him to take him home immediately. Had Mr. Winter been at hand, matters might have gone differently; but he went off the same night, after giving in his report to the Doctor, to communicate the affair to Arthur's relations, and did not return for several days.

As Trevor left the room there was a low murmur of dissatisfaction among the boys, and one or two seemed inclined to speak out. But the Doctor went on without noticing it.

"There was another boy," he said, "whom I punished at the same time for annoying this boy. Who was it? I do not clearly remember."

Joyce came forward. "It was me, sir."

"Ah! to be sure; so it was. Have you been teasing Johnstone again, Joyce? and do you know why he has taken this step, or where he has gone?"

"I haven't touched Arthur Johnstone, to my knowledge, sir, for the last fortnight; and I know no more where he has gone to, than you do."

This was true as regards the mere letter, for his persecution of Arthur had been limited to his assumption of Juggernaut's robes. But it needs not to say that in spirit it was as false as any lie that was ever told.

The Doctor seemed satisfied with the answer. "Am I to understand that no boy here can tell me why Johnstone has run away, or where he now is?"

A general silence ensued. Independently of their promise, the boys really did not consider that the usage which Arthur had received was sufficient to justify, or account for, the serious step he had taken; and, as regarded the place of his retreat, they were entirely ignorant. Dismissed by Dr. Brooksbank, they retired *en masse* to bed, and it needed nothing more than a few promises and threats on the part of Dalison and Joyce, to bind them anew to strict secrecy as to what had passed.

About an hour after their departure, Mr. Winter returned. He had obtained but little information, and that little very inconclusive. A servant in the employ of the gentleman who lived next door had

seen some one drop from the wall of the playground some two hours before; and a woman returning from London had met a boy nearly corresponding to Arthur's description walking rapidly, with a basket in his hand, in the direction of the ferry. The ferryman, however, on being questioned, declared that he had not conveyed any boy over the river that afternoon; and no other trace of him could be discovered.

On the following day the search was renewed; bills were posted; advertisements inserted in the papers; the Bow-street runners called into requisition; and every possible effort made to obtain a clue to the mystery. But, beyond the discovery of the basket half hidden among some rushes by the water's edge, no trace whatever could be found. The suspicion that the boy, whose fits of passionate fury had become notorious at Brunswick House, had destroyed himself in a paroxysm of anger, gained ground in the school, and so terrified the boys during the few remaining days of the half year, that they scarcely dared breathe a word to one another on the subject. Joyce and Dalison, in particular, were more quiet and subdued in their demeanour than they had ever been during the whole of their career at Martin's Green; and their last week there was one of unusual peace and quiet to their schoolfellows.

The school broke up at last, and they departed with the rest, unaccused by any—unsuspected by

any of the masters, excepting Mr. Winter; who felt that his suspicions were of too vague a character to allow of his giving them expression.

It has been already intimated that Arthur's mother and guardian were immediately applied to; but Mr. Winter, after much inquiry, found that the guardian had died within the last few weeks, and that the mother had left England, having gone no one knew whither. After the lapse of several months, a reply was received to a letter written to Mrs. Johnstone—offering no explanation, but simply requesting that the matter might be allowed to drop, as it could tend to no good purpose to pursue it further. No elucidation of the mystery was ever received by Dr. Brooksbank, or any of his colleagues at Brunswick House. But the story was handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation of boys; receiving, at every transmission, new embellishments and distortions, until, for anything I know, it may have reached our own day. But if so, I will answer for it that those who remembered the actual occurrence will scarcely recognise a feature of it.

As for Frank Trevor, he was laid up the next day with a sharp attack of illness, and was confined for several days to the house. He was deeply hurt at the injustice he had received, and did not make sufficient allowance for Dr. Brooksbank's not unnatural mistake. Mr. Winter was not there to help him;

and his father, who had learned that he was ill, and knew that there remained but a few days of the half-year, readily assented to his request, and removed him home.

Joyce and Dalison went to the college at Addiscombe, Trevor to Haileybury, so that the schoolfellows did not meet again. Frank was greatly moved by the disappearance of the little boy who had been the victim of such unprovoked unkindness, and who had evinced for himself, in his strange and uncouth fashion, a sentiment of gratitude and affection. He resolved that he would always wear the gold chain and ornament; which Arthur must have placed round his neck when he parted from him; and which might have been, for all he could tell, one of the last acts of his unhappy life. This resolution he persisted in, all his life afterwards.

And now I think I hear my readers complaining that this is not only a very lame, but a very objectionable conclusion to the story. Here is a poor little boy hunted and tortured, until he is driven to desperation; and yet no redress is given him, and no punishment overtakes his persecutors. And worse than this, here is a boy who manfully stood up and suffered in his behalf, not only failing to obtain the credit he justly deserved, but even quitting the scene under the imputation of having committed the very offence, which he had exerted

himself so manfully to prevent others from committing.

Well, good reader, and even if this were so, would it be very unlike what we often see passing in this world around us? Would Frank Trevor have any great reason to complain, or Dalison and Joyce to exult? Would the one have missed his reward, or the others escaped their punishment, supposing that our tale ended here? No thoughtful-minded man would say so. Frank's true recompence consisted in the mastery he had gained over himself; in the successful discipline of his spirit in this his first passage of arms with evil, which had made him stronger to meet the future trials of life. What was the prize he had missed, or the praise of his masters, compared with this? And his two schoolfellows—had they really escaped punishment? No, far from it. Better for them a hundred times to have been exposed and subject to the severest penalties, than to have done the wrong they did, and escaped with seeming impunity. Justice is ever done, and punishment exacted to the utmost; though they who see the wrong, are not always permitted to witness the retribution. But if you will bestow your patience on me for one chapter more, you will learn that, even regarding the question from your point of view, your strictures are misapplied.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST OF ARTHUR.

IN the summer of 1824, some seven or eight years after the occurrences related in the last chapter, the Governor-General of India, Lord Amherst, had occasion to send one of his secretaries on a confidential mission to the British Resident at Delhi. Troubles had broken out among the Mahrattas, a wild, fierce race, who had never wholly succumbed to European ascendency; and it was feared that a sanguinary war would be the result. Buldeo Singh, who had been for many years the faithful ally of England, had recently died, leaving a son too young to assume the reins of government; and the brother of the late Rajah, Doorjun Saul, had usurped the throne. The English authorities had shown some symptoms of vacillation in their dealings with him. These, as might have been foreseen, had encouraged him to assume a more defiant tone than he would otherwise have ventured on; and it was now felt that there was no course open to them but to despatch a large military force to Bhurtpore, and reduce him to submission. Francis Trevor, who had arrived some five years previously in India, accom-

panied the secretary on his mission; and together they travelled with all the speed and secrecy which it was possible to secure in those days, arriving at Agra even earlier than the Governor-General had anticipated. Here Trevor and his principal parted company—the latter proceeding with the same rapidity as before to Delhi, the former accompanying a squadron of the —th regiment of native cavalry; which had been for some time quartered at Agra, and were now ordered to march without the delay of an hour on Bhurtpore. Trevor was greatly surprised—more surprised than pleased—at recognizing in the subaltern officers commanding the detachment, his old schoolfellows, Joyce and Dalison. They had proceeded to Addiscombe at the end of the half-year following Arthur Johnstone's disappearance, and in process of time had obtained their commissions in the Company's service. It will readily be believed that neither party was very anxious to renew an intimacy, the termination of which had been attended by circumstances so unwelcome; nor was Trevor the more inclined to such a course by the reports he received at Agra of his former schoolfellows. However, as they must inevitably be fellow-travellers for the next few days, and moreover would have no other persons with whom they could exchange even the most ordinary conversation, they were obliged to assume a virtue if they had it not, and affect a show of mutual cordiality.

Thus they proceeded for the first three days; on the last of which the reconnoitring parties, which from time to time they sent out, began to bring in some doubtful and even alarming rumours. They were advancing into the Mahratta country, and symptoms of its disturbed condition began everywhere to show themselves. Sometimes they came on a village which had been sacked, and the bodies of the inhabitants, killed or wounded, lay in all directions by the roadside. From some of the survivors they learned that the leader of the foray in which they had fallen was one Ahmed Singh, Rajah of Jesselpore, who had warmly espoused the faction of Doorjun Saul, and had made a descent on the villages which refused to recognise his supremacy. It was added, that he had with him a large cavalry force, much superior in numbers to that commanded by Joyce and Dalison; but it was generally believed that, hearing of the approach of the European troops, he had withdrawn beyond the Sutlej.

"That is lucky," observed Joyce, when the non-commissioned officer had finished his report. "We have heard plenty of our friend Ahmed during our stay at Agra, and I have no fancy to encounter his troopers with such a handful of fellows as we have got with us."

"No," said Dalison, "more especially as we have to pass the Dhoondah. I am half inclined to remain

here until Warren comes up. These Mahrattas are as wily as serpents; and very likely Ahmed has only pretended to retire, in order to come upon us unawares to-morrow."

"Is the Dhoondah pass very dangerous?" asked Trevor.

"Dangerous? I believe you," replied Dalison. "The rocks are two hundred feet high on each side in some places, and the opening scarcely thirty feet wide. A lot of old women might settle the whole of us, if they knew how to go to work. What were your instructions, Joyce? Have you any discretion as to stopping or going on?"

"Well, I am afraid not," replied Joyce, consulting the written memorandum given him by the commandant at Agra. "He says, 'Press on with all possible speed, and without the delay of an hour.' You see, if we knew that Ahmed was in possession of the passes, it would be a different thing. It would be sheer madness, and certain sacrifice of all lives, to go on then. But you have heard that our fellows report that the enemy has fallen back, and the pass is open."

"You must push on at all risks," said Trevor; "I know it is of the utmost importance, and, if I may venture to advise, we had better move instantly, so as to pass the defile before nightfall. If Ahmed Singh has retired, the pass will of course be open now;

but as soon as he learns the smallness of our force, is he not pretty sure to return?"

"True," said Joyce, "we had better set out at once. Sergeant, give orders to march in half an hour; meanwhile send a corporal's guard forward to reconnoitre the pass."

They were soon in the saddle again, and an hour or two's steady riding brought them to the entrance of the ravine. Here they were met by one of the soldiers of the guard, who had been sent forward, with the intelligence that the advanced party had traversed the whole of the defile without encountering the slightest opposition. Satisfied with this assurance, Joyce, by Dalison's advice, ordered an immediate advance, as rapid as the nature of the ground would permit. Had he scrutinised the faces of some of his veteran troopers, he would have read on them an expression which might have induced him to pause; but Dalison, notwithstanding his natural sagacity, was a haughty and rather indolent officer; who, like many of his countrymen, held the natives in too much contempt to inquire what they might say or think.

His omission proved as fatal as it has done on subsequent occasions. They had reached the narrowest gorge of the ravine without interruption, when on a sudden a shout was heard from the precipice above them; and the next moment a huge mass of earth, mingled with stone and timber, fell directly in the

path, which it blocked up so as to present for the moment an impassable obstacle. At the same instant a soldier came galloping up to announce that a strong body of Mahrattas were attacking them in the rear. It was evident that they were caught in a trap; and the next minute the fact was still more clearly evidenced by the appearance of sharpshooters, half concealed in the crevices of the rocks above, whose fire emptied saddle after saddle without the least possibility of retaliation. It was impracticable alike to advance or retreat; and the cry for quarter, which was raised as soon as the hopelessness of the situation became apparent, was sternly disregarded. At length the few who still survived unhurt, among whom Trevor and the two officers were included, succeeded in surmounting, by desperate efforts, the mass of ruin by which the road had been barricaded, and galloped in safety through the remainder of the defile.

But they had little reason to congratulate themselves on their escape. As they emerged from the pass, they found themselves in the midst of a troop of irregular horse—the vanguard, as they learned, of Ahmed's army, and would have been instantly cut down, but that the epaulettes of the officers, and still more the dress and appearance of Trevor, marked them out as persons of distinction. The officer in command ordered them to be instantly disarmed and secured in close custody, until the Rajah himself should come

up. He accompanied this act of lenity, however, with an assurance, that he only thereby delayed their execution for a few hours; as his chief had sworn to spare no Europeans who might fall into his power, and it was an oath which he had never broken. With this comfortable assurance he left them in charge of a ferocious-looking Mahratta, who kept guard over them through the night with a drawn scimitar in his hand; which he occasionally brandished over their heads with a significant gesture, implying the extreme pleasure with which he would, and probably should, employ it upon them.

The night passed as cheerlessly as might have been expected. All three had given up any hope of escape or deliverance. Ahmed Singh was well known throughout the whole surrounding district for the merciless severity with which he put to death every European, and particularly every Englishman, that fell into his hands. A price had in consequence been set upon his head, the knowledge of which circumstance added desperation to his natural ferocity. It was impossible to expect assistance from the troops advancing from Agra. Occupied as the defile now was by a strong military power, it could not be forced; at least not without repeated efforts, which would cause protracted delay, and a terrible sacrifice of life. A few hours must inevitably place their lives at the mercy of the Mahratta Rajah; and that

they felt was equivalent to the sentence of immediate death.

Early in the morning they were roused from the stupor, rather than sleep, into which they had fallen, by the arrival of a messenger from the Rajah, requiring them to be brought into his presence. He had come up, they learned, from the Sutlej, and was now encamped at a few miles' distance. It is not easy at any time to daunt English officers; nevertheless, the strange and savage appearance of their captors, and the looks of undisguised hatred expressed by every eye which rested upon them, were enough to strike terror into the bravest bosom. On reaching the outskirts of the camp, they were met by the Rajah's body-guard, with drawn scimitars, who conducted them to his presence.

Ahmed Singh was leaning against the pillar of the tent, engaged in council with his officers, when the prisoners were introduced. Even at that trying moment, Trevor could not help being struck with his appearance, which seemed the perfect impersonation of an Eastern robber. He was evidently in the very prime of youth—scarcely more, it seemed, than twenty years of age, but had the brow and glance of a man of forty. His tall, martial figure was clad in the armour, with which Indian artists of late years have made us so familiar; and the light, flexible ring mail seemed to fit him, as the skin of the panther

does the animal to which it belongs. Perceiving their entrance, he broke off the conversation by which he had been engrossed, and gave an order, in his own language, to the guards to bring the prisoners forward. Then seating himself on the pile of cushions spread for him, he contemplated them with a stern and haughty glance, and inquired in very intelligible English, which was the leader of the party. Joyce replying that he was the senior officer present, the Rajah proceeded to put to him a string of questions, demanding the number of soldiers under his own command, and of those now on their march from Agra; the place on which they had been directed to move; and the purpose for which the movement was made. Observing Joyce falter and hesitate, he interrupted him with a fierce gesture and exclamation.

"Beware! dog of a Feringhi, that you palter not with me. I never loved your race; and it needs but a motion of my hand, and your head will roll on the floor of this tent. Ha!" he muttered in a lower tone to himself, "where can I have seen that face? It seems familiar to me, yet I have never encountered an officer of his regiment before! It must be fancy. Tell me once more," he resumed in a louder tone, "the precise number of men composing your regiment, and of the troop under your command."

Notwithstanding the threat, which was evidently no idle one, Joyce still hesitated. He was aware that

his life would be instantly forfeited if he should refuse to answer the questions put to him, or should be detected in the slightest mis-statement; nor would there be any security, that even should he answer all that was asked of him correctly, the wily savage would not order his execution, as soon as he had ascertained what he required. But he was aware also, that he was in possession of information of which the Rajah knew nothing, and in exchange for which he would willingly give him his life and liberty, if he could only make the bargain with him. This would be treason, no doubt, but his life was at stake, and Joyce was not the man—as the reader knows, he had not been the boy—to sacrifice himself to a sense of honour. Besides, he argued that the Rajah would be sure to obtain the information from Dalison, if not from himself; so that the interests of the English government would suffer quite as much, even if he remained silent. Addressing his questioner therefore, in his own language, with which Joyce had some slight acquaintance, he begged the Rajah to defer his inquiries until he could grant him a private interview; when he had secret intelligence for his ear of the utmost consequence, which he would impart on condition of his life being spared.

Ahmed Singh smiled with bitter scorn, and desired two of his guards to convey Joyce into an adjoining tent, and there wait his arrival. Then motioning

to the others, he caused Trevor to be placed before him, and addressed to him the same questions which he had previously put to Joyce.

"I am a civilian," replied Trevor calmly, "and do not know the numbers of the forces under the English general, nor the order of their march."

"A civilian, do you say? are you attached to the mission of the envoy despatched to Delhi?"

"Yes," replied Trevor.

"Then perhaps you are in possession of the same information, which the dog, from whom I have just parted, has offered me in exchange for his life. If so, I will more willingly make the bargain with you than with him. I like your face, as well as I can like that of a Feringhi; but his is, for some cause, odious to me. I would rather spare you than him, if I must spare one."

"Whatever information I may possess," replied Frank, in the same tone as before, "is the secret of my sovereign and my country. It would be the act of a traitor to divulge it."

"Ha, you refuse!" exclaimed the Rajah. "Guards, your scimitars! Yet stay! he may have some secret instructions concealed about his person. Tear open his dress, and search."

The guards obeyed, and stripping off the prisoner's upper coat, proceeded carefully to examine its contents and afterwards the other articles of his clothing.

Presently their researches brought to light a chain hung round his neck, to which a gold ornament of a remarkable shape and fashion was attached. As the eye of Ahmed, who was closely observant of all that passed, lit on this object, he uttered a sudden exclamation of surprise.

"Hold!" he cried, "and hand hither the piece of gold which the prisoner wears attached to that chain. By the sword of the Prophet, it is the same! Ho, Feringhi! tell me your name, and whence you obtained this ornament."

"It was given me, or rather left in my charge, by a schoolfellow, a countryman, I believe, of your own, years ago, in England."

"And your name?" said his questioner.

"Is Francis Trevor."

"Release him," said the Rajah, "and give him his robe again. We march in a quarter of an hour for Bhurtpore. Provide a horse for the Feringhi, and treat him with all possible honour. He will ride by my side, and share my tent this evening. For the other two, they remain your prisoners. See they escape not, or your lives will answer for theirs. Now leave us, let all be in readiness for departure. Trevor," he added, turning to the Englishman, who, divided between astonishment at the strange scene, and thankfulness at his unhoped for escape, knew not how to express the feelings which were struggling for utter-

ance, "do not look so amazed. I am the schoolfellow who hung round your neck the piece of gold which has saved your life. You cannot have forgotten Arthur Johnstone?"

During the march to Bhurtpore there was ample leisure for Trevor to hear the still stranger sequel of the strange story, which the reader has already perused in the earlier chapters of this narrative. Arthur Johnstone was, it appeared, the only son of Jessel Singh, a Mahratta chief who had waged incessant warfare with the British government for more than twenty years; and who, though disastrously defeated by Lord Lake, and reduced to a condition little better than that of a robber, had contrived to maintain his independence. Notwithstanding that, like all Mussulmans of high rank, he had several wives, there was no male heir to his throne, until it chanced that in one of his numerous inroads on the Company's territory, an English lady and her daughter, named Johnstone, fell into his hands. He became deeply enamoured of the latter, and partly by threats, partly by persuasion, prevailed on her to become his wife. She bore him the only son that was ever born to his house, and was thenceforth regarded by Jessel Singh with even greater honour and affection than before. Notwithstanding this, the lady, who was fickle and self-willed, began to grow weary, after a time, of the barbaric splendour and sudden vicissitudes

of fortune between which her life alternated. Seizing the opportunity of the Rajah's lengthened absence on a marauding expedition, she fled to the sea coast and embarked for England, taking with her her son and a large amount of property in gold and jewels. The Rajah, on his return to Jesselpore, was bitterly incensed at his wife's treachery. For herself, he swore that not only would he never again permit her to enter his presence, but he would revenge her perfidy on all her countrymen who might fall into his hands. But his son he resolved to recover, if it should be possible for him to do so. He accordingly despatched a European servant of his wife, who had remained faithful to his service, with instructions to follow and discover the retreat of the fugitives in England, and having ascertained this, at once to communicate it to him.

The servant reached England about two months after Arthur had been consigned to Dr. Brooksbank's school; and by dint of unremitting inquiries and a profuse expenditure of money, succeeded in discovering the place of his young master's residence. He was on the point of conveying the intelligence of his success, as he had been instructed to do, when a strange chance threw the boy himself into his power. "You remember," said the Rajah at this point of the narrative, as he rode by Trevor's side through a defile, not unlike the one which had so

nearly proved fatal to him on the previous day—"you remember, I doubt not, that when I would not consent to offer sacrifice, even in sport, to the accursed idol, whom every true follower of the prophet accounts to be one and the same with Zatanai himself—they narrowly escaped the retribution which I had prepared for them, and ran like frightened sheep from the chamber, leaving you and me alone in it. I resolved at once that I would stay no longer to be the object of their feeble malignity; but I would not go without bidding you farewell, who alone had been my steadfast friend. You, however, were too weak and faint to understand me, and I could not delay. I could but hang the small gold ornament, which I had brought with me from Jesselpore, round your neck, and then make my escape as quickly as I could; taking with me the poor reptile, who would surely have been the subject of their cruelty, had I left it behind. I lowered myself from the window, and was hurrying down to the river side, to replace the snake in the spot whence I had taken it, when, to our mutual astonishment, I encountered the Feringhi servant whom my father had sent in search of me. A hasty explanation followed. We left England a few days afterwards, and returned to India; visiting my mother on the way, in an obscure spot to which she had retired for fear of discovery, but which she had previously disclosed to me. Threatened

by my companion with exposure and punishment, she readily agreed to give me up to my father, and check all inquiries respecting me."

Arrived in Jesselpore, my father received me with open arms, and under his teaching I grew up a warrior and a chief. Like him, I have avenged the wrongs which my race has sustained from the Feringhies with my sword. Blame me not. You cannot feel as I do—as the descendant of a race of conquerors feels, towards the only nation who have crushed and trampled them. Now tell me, on the honour of a Feringhi gentleman, are your companions the men I suspect?"

"They are your old schoolfellows," said Trevor, faltering. "Think how young they were when they injured and distressed you. You will not revenge on the man the faults of the boy?"

Ahmed made no answer. The towers of Bhurtpore were now in sight, and he rode forward to give the necessary instructions to his officers before entering its gates.

On the following day Francis Trevor, loaded with rich presents, and escorted by a troop of cavalry bearing a flag of truce, was despatched to Delhi; where he was received by his friends, who had been informed of the defeat and capture of Joyce's troop, with little less surprise than would have been felt, if he had risen from the dead. While taking his leave of the Rajah,

he again endeavoured to obtain some promise of mercy for his companions; but his entreaties produced no effect beyond a stern frown and an ominous silence. A like attempt was made by the Resident at Delhi, who sent an officer with an offer to exchange some prisoners of rank, who had fallen into his hands, for Dalison and Joyce; but to this overture also no answer was returned.

A few months afterwards the fortress of Bhurtpore was assaulted and captured, with terrible slaughter, by the British troops, under Lord Combermere; and Ahmed Singh, together with nearly the whole of the force immediately under his command, perished in the explosion of a mine. After the fall of the fortress, Trevor, who had accompanied the army for that special purpose, made a most careful examination of the dungeons it contained, and also instituted every possible inquiry; publicly proclaiming his readiness to pay a large sum to any one who would give him authentic information as to the fate of his former schoolfellows. But his efforts proved wholly fruitless for many years. At last, when he was past middle age, and had risen to a high rank in the Company's service, an old man in the attire of a travelling Derveesh presented himself one day at his private house, and, drawing from under his cloak the long-forgotten proclamation, asked the Sahib if he was willing to make good the offer it contained. Sir

Francis Trevor consented, on condition of receiving sufficient proof of the accuracy of his statements; and the Mahratta then produced a watch and a letter-case, engraved with the names of the ill-fated officers. Sir Francis, whom I met a few years afterwards on his return to England, told me that the Derveesh had detailed to him with the most immovable calmness the particulars of their death; but, he added, they were of a nature too shocking to allow of his communicating them to others.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. RAWDON'S DEBUT.

"AS is the generation of leaves, such is that of men." So wrote Dan Homer in that all-admired speech of Glaucus. No doubt his words are applicable enough to all mankind; but there are none whom the simile suits so aptly, as the head boys at a large school. Their reign literally does not last longer than the leaves on the forest trees. They are green one summer, flourishing in all the pride of seniority and leadership; and the next, they are whisked away, who can say where—north, south, east, and west; no longer dreaded and admired, but made almost as small account of in the great world, as though they had been really the dried leaves of the past autumn. And in the places where they flourished and held sway, lo! another generation of boys, as much looked up to and feared, and followed, as they were themselves, but a brief twelvemonth ago! The dignity of a first class-boy at a great school much resembles that of Mumbo Jumbo in an African village—lasting but for a brief season, but absolute as the Cæsars, while it does last.

These, or something nearly resembling these, were the reflections of Mr. Winter; as he sat at his window watching the boys at play, one day in the spring of the year following that on which Arthur Johnstone's disappearance had occurred. All the head boys of the previous year had left Martin's Green. Dalison and Joyce had migrated to Addiscombe, and Trevor to Haileybury, as the reader has already learned. Norton was an undergraduate at Cambridge, and Brackley a cornet of hussars. Heath, Gore, and Robinson were now the leaders of the school, together with our old friend Stapleton, otherwise Billy Waters; who had been promoted to the head form at the commencement of the present half-year, and was as little sobered by his elevation, and by consequence perhaps, as much a favourite with his schoolfellows, as he could well be.

An accession to the school had, however, taken place some nine or ten months before the commencement of the narrative; which had rendered the supremacy of the triumvirate above named somewhat doubtful. William Tyrrell, the new comer, was older by a year or two, than those whom Dr. Brooksbank was in the habit of receiving: too old indeed to be received at all, in accordance with his ordinary rule. But there were special circumstances which induced him to set it aside in Tyrrell's favour. The latter was the son of an old friend and schoolfellow, who had devoted many

years of his life to the education of his only son. He had been promised a valuable appointment for him, provided he should be found equal to passing a severe examination, to which he was to be subjected on attaining his eighteenth year. Mr. Tyrrell, who was himself a brilliant scholar, had pursued his self-imposed task with signal success for many years; until a sudden and severe illness so enfeebled his powers of mind and body, that he was ordered by his physicians to desist from his undertaking, or he would in all likelihood imperil, not only his recovery, but his life. Nearly two years must still elapse before William could present himself for the examination; and although, thus far, his progress had been all that could be desired, his education must still be carried on by an able teacher, or there would be risk of failure. In this extremity Mr. Tyrrell had sought the aid of his old schoolfellow, Dr. Brooksbank, who had willingly stretched a point to oblige him. Independently of his desire to gratify an old friend, William Tyrrell was a pupil whom any schoolmaster might covet. His manners were unusually gentlemanlike and quiet; and there was an air of sincerity about him which commanded respect. Though diligent and thoughtful, he was nevertheless no bookworm, but was as much at home in the cricket-ground or the hunting-field as any of his less studious companions; nor was there a boy in the school who would have been his match in a

fair stand-up fight. Yet with all these brilliant qualities he was not popular; for he had one great fault which marred, and almost neutralised, their influence. This was his pride, or rather that combination of pride and vanity, which is much more common in the same character, than some would have us believe. He had a natural abhorrence of everything crooked or underhand, and the peculiar circumstances of his education had strengthened the feeling. But he could never endure to fail, or even to come short of entire success in whatever he undertook; and whenever his pre-eminence was endangered, the temptation to resort to any means in order to ensure success was so strong, that those who knew him best, doubted whether it might not on occasion overpower his better nature. Boys seldom approve of a companion who seeks to carry away the palm in everything they undertake in common, and generally make him a mark for ridicule and practical jesting. But besides this, Tyrrell's pride frequently rendered him cold and repellent to those who, as he fancied, wished to patronise him, or intrude on his private feelings; though, in most instances, they were actuated by simple good nature. It is no wonder, then, that Tyrrell was but little liked, especially by his compeers. Heath and Gore he had mortally offended long ago, by the disgust he early showed at some trickery which they practised on the head master, considering it all fair according to their code of

morality; but which Tyrrell repudiated without ceremony or measure. Robinson again, from whom he had wrested the prize which otherwise would have fallen to him, regarded him with scarcely less dislike; in which the upper boys mostly concurred. They thought it very hard that a new fellow, who had never been through the lower forms of the school, or undergone the drudgery of the juniorship, should cut in just at the last, and carry off all the prizes.

Tyrrell had, however, one staunch friend, who stood up for him on all occasions, right or wrong; and that one was Billy Waters. This inordinate regard dated from the close of the winter half-year; and the incident which gave rise to it was a curious one, as well as highly characteristic of Billy. Perhaps its particulars may lighten the dulness of an introductory chapter. Leaving Mr. Winter, therefore, to moralise awhile over the fluctuations in the life of schoolboys, I proceed to relate it.

I mentioned earlier in my narrative, that the first classical master, Rawdon by name, was no particular favourite with the boys. He was stern, and, as we at least thought, needlessly exacting; but boys are not always the best judges of such matters as that. He was always very neat and precise in his dress, and we fancied that the scrupulous politeness which he always evinced towards the Doctor's family, was prompted by a romantic attachment to the eldest Miss Brooksbank.

To be sure, the lady was not remarkable for her personal charms; the principal points of her face being weak eyes, sandy hair, and a freckled skin. She had, moreover, decidedly outlived the *première jeunesse*, and was fast settling down into old maidenhood. But we held that, however undesirable she might be in the general point of view, she was quite good enough for old Rawdon. Nay, we even argued that this very lack of charms was a proof of the truth of our conjectures; alleging that the crafty Rawdon counted upon that, as being likely to induce her to favour his suit, in default of any other aspirant to her hand. Rawdon and the fair Althea, standing at the shrine of Hymen, with a clergyman in full canonicals in the background—the design being in the main copied from a valentine, which one of the boys had received in the February previous—formed a favourite subject for the pencils of the young idlers, during the hour when they were supposed to be learning their construing lesson. The likenesses, as might be expected, were not in general particularly truthful; and, unless assisted by a letter-press key at the bottom, scarcely likely to be recognised—a circumstance which proved fortunate for Middleton on one occasion, when his Schrevelius' Lexicon, embellished by the design above inscribed, but without any written explanation, fell into the hands of Rawdon himself. The head usher had detected the delinquent in the very act of com-

pleting his frontispiece, at the time when he was presumed to be engaged on his Homer lesson; and, taking the book from him, had descanted at much length on the enormity of the proceeding. Warned by the titter of the boys, when they caught sight of the sketch, that there was something more than commonly facetious expressed by it, Rawdon puckered up his forehead and blinked his eyes, as he was wont to do when more than usually puzzled. But he could make nothing of it, and Middleton sustained no severer chastisement than a box on the ear for scribbling in his Lexicon, when he ought to have been putting it to its legitimate use.

It chanced that one summer holidays Tom Hunter's parents made a tour through France and Switzerland, and took their son with them. In the course of their travels, they put up for a day at one of the French towns, which lay quite out of the ordinary route of tourists. Finding the evening hang rather heavy on their hands, they paid a visit to the gardens, a sort of Champs Elysées on a small scale, where music and dancing and acting were going on: and whom do you think Hunter saw there, seated at one of the tables, eating his supper, and watching a vaudeville that was being performed? Why old Rawdon himself! And that wasn't the best of the joke either; for there was a woman with him—she scarcely looked like a lady—and two girls; and it struck Tom all of a heap, that

these must be his wife and children. He remembered that there had been a very ancient and dim tradition that Rawdon was a married man. But nothing ever having appeared to lend colour to it, the idea had grown up that Mrs. Rawdon was a mythical personage; and this notion was further developed by subsequent commentators, who declared that she was but a shadowing forth of a future Mrs. Rawdon, and was in fact, *in præsenti*, Miss Brooksbank. Now, however, it was evident that, like many other rumours, there was more fact than myth connected with it. Tom Hunter took care to make sure of the truth of his conjectures. He followed Rawdon home at a safe distance, and ascertained from the waiter at the hotel that it was really M. and Madame Rawdon and family who were staying there. Wasn't there just a laugh about it at the beginning of the next half-year, when Hunter told the story after the fellows had gone to bed, and again the next morning to the other boys, who had heard some particulars, and wanted to learn the truth about it! There wasn't anything else talked about for the next fortnight in the school, I verily believe.

The boys in general were satisfied with a few hearty laughs at the discovery; but Billy Waters was not so easily contented. Nothing would please him short of finding out the place of Mrs. Rawdon's abode, and obtaining a sight of the lady herself. He watched old Rawdon as a cat watches a mouse, trying to catch

him unawares. The usher was in the habit of going out for the Sunday every alternate week, as well as occasionally on half-holidays, and Billy moved heaven and earth to get asked out on the same days, in order that he might, as he expressed it, "follow old Rawbones's trail." Once or twice he succeeded in this, and did dog the usher's steps, until he saw him get upon the coach which went every morning to London; but he did not dare to accompany him any further, as Rawdon would certainly have turned the tables upon him. Months went by; the affair had been almost forgotten by everybody but Billy, when his pertinacity was, in a most unforeseen manner rewarded by the discovery of the information he desired. Rawdon, who was always very careful to post his letters himself, was one day called out of school by a hurried message from the Doctor, requiring his immediate presence. In his haste the usher omitted to put into his pocket a letter which he had that minute sealed and directed. Billy was not slow to avail himself of this oversight, and mounting on the master's stool read to his infinite satisfaction the address—"Mrs. Rawdon, 9, Upper Stock Street, Commercial Road, London." The keen and distrustful look which Mr. Rawdon cast round him, when he returned and found the letter lying exposed on his desk, would have put a less self-possessed person out of countenance; but it produced no effect on the calm serenity of Billy Waters's features, and the

master remained satisfied that no one had read the direction.

Billy treasured up the information carefully, often cudgelling his brains to determine how to turn it to the best account; and in the December of the year of Tyrrell's arrival, an opportunity at last offered itself, as he thought, which was too tempting to be neglected. Dr. Brooksbank was always in the habit, at the close of the winter half-year, of inviting the friends of the boys to see the prizes given away, hear some speeches declaimed, and partake of a cold *déjeûner*, on the occasion of the breaking up of the school. He had resolved, for some reason which did not transpire, to crown this entertainment, for once in a way, by a ball in the evening; at which the sisters of the boys and several of the families in the neighbourhood were invited to be present. The boys themselves, it needs not be said, entered heartily into the spirit of the thing, and for a fortnight at least before the close of the half, the ball was the chief topic of conversation. The two head boys, however, were too much interested in the approaching contest for the prize, to share the general excitement: and Tyrrell, who was learning by rote a long string of dates in ancient Roman history, on the morning of the examination, was somewhat annoyed by Billy Waters's importunity; when the latter besought him in the most earnest manner to lend him a seal and a sheet of letter paper, or he would certainly be too late for the post.

"Can't you get them of some one else, Billy?" he said. Mine are all in my desk upstairs. I must go to Mother Brooksbank for the key to the bedroom flight of stairs before I can get them; and I haven't time as it is to get these dates up, before we shall be called in for examination."

"No one else has any," said Waters, "or I wouldn't have bothered you, as I know you are knee deep in it; and there is no time to send to the shop. Go, there is a good fellow, won't you? And as for the dates, I'll learn 'em for you, while you're away."

Tyrrell, who was after all a good-natured fellow when his pride was not concerned, put down his book and fetched the articles required. He then resumed his studies, which, as the reader will presently learn, were crowned with success. He thought no more of the request made by his schoolfellow, and the circumstance would soon have passed away altogether from his memory, had not a very unusual occurrence recalled it.

The morning of the prize day had arrived; and the boys, who had already packed their boxes ready for their departure with their friends that night or the following morning, busied themselves in helping the servants to prepare the rooms for the approaching festivity. That is to say, they busied themselves with what they called "helping" the servants, though the latter were ungrateful enough to view their assistance

in a different light; and more than once to invoke the protection of the masters against the indiscreet zeal of their unsought auxiliaries. Servants, however, at a school are an enduring race, and the occasion was one of so much rejoicing to them, as well as to their tormentors, seeing that they were going to be rid of the latter for five or six weeks at least, that the breaches made in their temper were repaired almost as fast as they were caused. There was the schoolroom first to be arranged. That was the state room of course, where the speeches were made and the prizes given away. A stage, covered with green baize, was erected at one end, and at the other stood the magisterial throne of Dr. Brooksbank, with his ushers seated in state on either side of him. Long rows of chairs, placed with their backs to the walls, accommodated the visitors; and in the centre of the room the table was placed, with a glittering array of prizes arranged upon it. Then there was the boys' dining hall; that was to be the ballroom. All the furniture was removed from it; the walls were festooned with holly and mistletoe; and two chandeliers, similarly decorated, were suspended from the ceiling. All the benches and forms were conveyed to the long-room, where the supper was to be laid out; and here occurred a fight, as furious as that waged round the body of Patroclus. John Browning, the Doctor's head servant, insisted on the room being kept clear during the carrying in of the

dainties. But the boys continued to throng in again every time the door was opened, until at last John declared in despair that it was no more use clearing them out, than it was brushing away flies in harvest; and implored the senior ushers to interpose in his behalf, and rescue him before his senses should have entirely deserted him. Mr. Rawdon was disposed to order the boys into their bedrooms, and set them some lessons to learn; a proposal which, it need not be said, excited the utmost indignation. But Mr. Winter, more equal to the occasion, marched the whole school off to a neighbouring pond which was frozen strongly over, and contrived to detain them there until four o'clock; when it was time for them to return to the house and prepare for the arrival of the company, which took place at five.

The speeches and distribution of the prizes went off with more than usual *éclat*. Everybody seemed pleased excepting old Rawdon, who looked glum, or at least the boys fancied so. He had no particular liking for Tyrrell, who had never passed through his hands, as all the other first-form boys had; and whom he regarded as an interloper in consequence. It was thought by the boys, therefore, that he was vexed at Tyrrell's having gained the prize over Heath's and Robinson's heads, and was out of sorts in consequence. But then the boys were not overfond of Mr. Rawdon at any time, and were more than commonly angry with him just

now, in consequence of his ill-advised proposal respecting the lessons that morning. But whether they were or were not mistaken on the subject, they soon ceased to think at all about it. No sooner had the speeches been ended, and the last prize given away, which occurred a little before seven o'clock, than tea was handed round to all the company; and the boys went up to dress for the ball, which was to open at eight. Wasn't it prime fun, I believe you just, looking over the banisters or standing near the door, to see the company arrive! There was John Browning in a new livery, consisting of a green coat and silver buttons, a canary waistcoat and knees, announcing them as they arrived; and Tom Hall, the shoeboy, in his best page's dress, all green cloth and shiny buttons, taking the hats and coats from the gentlemen in the hall. Old Brooksbank himself in his tightest suit, his legs exhibiting the perfection of their symmetry in a bran new pair of black silk stockings, stood at the upper end of the schoolroom to receive his guests; who walked through an admiring crowd up the room as to a Royal presence, at its further extremity. And didn't he grow more and more gracious and dignified as his more distinguished visitors made their appearance! Rat, tat, tat. John announces Colonel, Mrs., Mr., and Miss Coleby. The Doctor makes a profound bow to the Colonel and the ladies; saluting young Mr. Coleby, an old pupil, with paternal affability and interest. Rat, tat. Dr. Stevens, the Rector of

the parish, and three daughters. Rat, tat, tat. Sir George Mullins, an ex-Lord Mayor, but a genuine baronet, nevertheless, and the owner of the park on which the boys had held their pic-nic in the previous year. Dr. Brooksbank makes a step forward to meet the last-named guest, which he has not hitherto done, and his bow is a thought lower than before. Rat, tat. John announces the Rev. Mr. Whoppem, who keeps a rival establishment on the other side of the green. The doctor changes his demeanour, and is now demonstratively cordial and friendly; as though he would intimate that professional rivalry woke no bitterness in his bosom; while at the same time a slight undercurrent of self-satisfaction might be traced in his demeanour, as though he would say, "You can't do it in this style, and you know it." Observe, I only affirm that the Doctor *looked* this; for him to have *said* it, even in Johnsonian English, would have been a thing impossible. Rat, tat, tat. General and Lady Marsh, a delightful arrival—the General the father of three boys, one still at Brunswick House, grievously dull, to be sure, and rather scampishly inclined, but otherwise a delightful family. And now all the guests have come, except the most distinguished of them all, the Lord Chief Justice Stapleton; and his arrival may be expected every minute. Rat, tat, tat, tat. Here they are at last. The Doctor's ear catches the welcome sound. Mr. Rawdon pulls up his shirt-collar, and sidles up, so as

to catch the reversion of the great man's greetings. There is a slight delay and colloquy outside; and then John Browning throws the door open and exclaims in a voice which savours something of surprise, but which is distinctly audible through the whole of the room, "Mrs. and Miss Rawdon."

If the ghost of the Princess Charlotte, whose decease had lately occupied the public attention—if the ghost of the Princess Charlotte herself had been announced, it could hardly have produced a greater sensation. Dr. Brooksbank started with a most indecorous expression of surprise; the boys, who were all of them well acquainted with Tom Hunter's story, but in general had grave doubts as to its authenticity, stared as if the eyes would come out of their heads; and the guests, who saw that something extraordinary had occurred, looked on in silent expectation. All eyes concentred upon the door, through which these guests, whose arrival, it seemed, had caused so much excitement, were to appear. But the most striking figure of the group was Mr. Rawdon himself. He heard the words, but he could scarcely believe his ears. It never could be possible, after all that he had said, that they would venture to present themselves uninvited! no, no. It was only a hoax of some of these saucy boys, whose ears he would like to box. Alas, his inward assurances were cut short by an awful apparition. Through the doorway advanced a tall and very stout lady, attired in a

blue silk dress, made after the fashion then beginning to go out, with a waist close under the arm-pits; and exhibiting more of the lady's arms and bust than would now be accounted decorous, and which even then was scarcely agreeable. Her head was built up in a wonderful fashion, copied, it was conjectured, from some French print of the coiffure of Marie Antoinette; the style of which did not suit many faces, and certainly not that of the lady in question. She was followed by a younger lady, who was in all points a faithful miniature copy of her mamma, even to the florid bloom which irradiated her features. To conclude, the *toilette* of both ladies would have been greatly improved, if the articles they wore had not exhibited very evident indications of having done hard service in times past, probably before they passed into the possession of their present owners.

Dr. Brooksbank, as his eye lit on this singular exhibition, stared for a moment with the most unfeigned astonishment; mingled, as might well be expected, with something of indignation. Then the sense of what was due from him, even to an uninvited guest, prevailed over his displeasure; and he advanced to greet her. But before he could do so, Mr. Rawdon, red hot with anger and excitement, interposed.

"Dr. Brooksbank, this is a mistake, sir. I give you my honour, sir, I know nothing about it! Maria, how could you think of coming in this manner, ma'am,

into Dr. Brooksbank's house—uninvited, ma'am? I cannot understand it!"

"Uninvited, Mr. Rawdon!" exclaimed the lady. "Who told you I came uninvited? I think you might know better than to charge your own lawful wife with such things. Sally and I received an invitation this morning, as Dr. Brooksbank here knows. I am sure *I* shouldn't think of coming to any house without one, not *I* indeed."

The Doctor's politeness broke down under this unusual strain. "An invitation, madam!" he stammered.

"Yes, sir!" said the angry lady, "an invitation. Why I have got the note here, in the pocket of my dress:" and plunging her hand, not without considerable difficulty, into the receptacle referred to, she produced a letter, which she handed to Dr. Brooksbank.

He glanced through it in evident perplexity. The handwriting was either his, or so like his, that he could hardly have sworn in a Court of Justice, that it was not his writing. Yet he knew, of course, that it must be a fabrication.

"Come with me into another room, Mr. Rawdon, he whispered; "we must inquire into this matter. Meanwhile, Mrs. Rawdon, permit me to present you to Mrs. Brooksbank, who is happy to make your acquaintance. Let me add, that whatever may have procured us the pleasure of your company, you are most welcome."

"Rawdon," exclaimed the Doctor when they were alone in the little parlour, "this note has been written by one of the boys. Do you know the hand-writing?"

The usher took it and examined it closely. "I am not sure of the hand-writing, sir; but I know the seal, and I think the watermark on the paper. Yes," he said, after a closer scrutiny, "there is but one boy in the school who uses this seal—"

"And that boy?" asked the Doctor, as the other paused.

"Is Tyrrell," added Mr. Rawdon.

"Tyrrell!" exclaimed the head master in much surprise. "He is about the last boy I should suppose likely to be guilty of impertinence like this. Are you certain he uses this seal?"

"Quite certain, sir! If you will send for him, sir, he will not be able to deny it."

"I will do that of course. But I am convinced you must be mistaken."

Tyrrell was accordingly summoned, and the letter put into his hands. "Do you know anything of this, William?"

The boy looked carefully at the writing, and then replied, "No, sir."

"You mean you did not write it?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"And you do not know who did?"

"No, sir."

"Is not that your seal?" asked Mr. Rawdon.

Tyrrell examined it apparently in surprise, and then answered in a different tone, "I believe it is."

"It is!" said the Doctor. "Then if you did not seal it yourself, somebody must have used your seal. Have you lent it to any boy lately?"

Tyrrell paused awhile in thought, and then was on the point of giving a denial, when the recollection of Billy Waters and his request two days before recurred to him.

"Do you observe his embarrassment, sir?" said Mr. Rawdon. "I trust you will oblige him to answer; or withhold his prize, if he does not."

"I would rather not name any one," replied Tyrrell, respectfully. "I do not at all know that anybody, to whom I have lent the seal, used it on that letter. If I must choose, as Mr. Rawdon proposes, I would rather lose my prize."

"You will insist on his answering, sir, or forfeiting his prize, will you not?" repeated the usher.

"No, Mr. Rawdon," returned the Doctor, quietly. "I do not think it would be fair to do so. He has denied all knowledge of the matter, and we both, I feel sure, believe him. We ought not to compel him to say what he is naturally unwilling to tell us, and which may after all prove to be nothing to the purpose. Besides," he added, in a more cheerful tone, "there is no such great harm done, after all. I hope

Mrs. and Miss Rawdon will pass a pleasant evening; and I advise you to turn the laugh against the author of this silly trick, by enjoying it yourself."

"Tyrrell, you are a brick," observed Billy Waters, as they went up to bed that night after the ball, "and I owe you a good turn, which I shall not forget. I suppose it *was* rather too bad; but, you see, I never really believed she would come. And after all, as the Doctor said, there is no great harm done; and, oh my eye, wasn't old Rawdon's face a sight to see, when she was announced! I would have three dozen any day cheerfully, for the pleasure of looking at it!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE SWEEPSTAKES.

WE left Mr. Winter, at the outset of the last chapter, engaged in the employment most natural to a schoolmaster, viz., watching his pupils while engaged in their outdoor amusements. A deal of knowledge of boy-nature may be picked up in this way. "Do you see those two boys walking together?" said Dr. Arnold to one of his assistant masters. "I never saw them together before. You should make a point of observing the company they keep. Nothing so tells the changes in a boy's character."

I suppose the majority of readers would regard this as overstrained, and think that the chance companionship of an hour was too slight a foundation whereon to build any superstructure. But nearly all experienced schoolmasters would agree in the dictum of their distinguished fellow-craftsman. Such a remark would not indeed be true of *men*. The force of circumstances often throws persons habitually into each other's society, who are different in temper, character, and taste. But outward circumstances rarely make boys cronies. With them the employments and amusements of the day

are so identical in the instances of all, that they form no bond of union. There must be some special cause to bring about even the most shortlived companionship; some mutual hope, or dislike, or fear, or fancy.

Dr. Arnold's life had not been written; nay, the Doctor himself was theorising in his rooms at Oriel; little dreaming doubtless of the coming time, which was to turn his brilliant theories into grave and lasting realities, when Mr. Winter sat, as we have described, at his study window. But the thoughts which passed through his mind were so similar to those of the great Head Master of Rugby, as expressed in the foregoing quotation, that if he had put them into language, he would probably have used nearly the same words. His attention had in the first instance been attracted by a group of boys of various ages, gathered in one corner of the playground—not engaged in any of the games wherewith they usually diverted themselves, but apparently as much interested in their occupation, whatever it might be, as they could have been by leap-frog or rounders. "Choosing the two elevens for the Alphabet Match, as they call it, I daresay," thought he. "I heard it was to be played in a few days. The first half of the Alphabet will have it all their own way this year, I expect." Presently there was a commotion in the throng, and something like a scuffle; but Tyrrell and afterwards Heath coming up, the tumult abated, and in a few minutes the boys dispersed to their games.

In all this there was nothing unusual; but it did surprise Mr. Winter very much, when he looked out about half an hour afterwards, to see Tyrrell and Heath engaged in very earnest conversation in the play-ground; and then, having fetched their hats, sally out, evidently intending to walk together.

If Mr. Winter had known the true explanation of the scene which he had witnessed, it would at once have surprised and distressed him so much, that he would have thought but little of the companionship of two boys so unlike each other as Tyrrell and Heath. The concourse he had seen gathered together had been engaged in drawing lots for a sweepstakes; which the boys had got up on a steeple-chase shortly to come off in the neighbourhood. Until quite recently there had been nothing of this kind known at Brunswick House. But it had unfortunately happened that Nicolls and Brackley, two of Dr. Brooksbank's former pupils, now officers in his Majesty's —th regiment of Hussars, had been quartered for several months in the neighbourhood of Martin's Green, and had constantly ridden over to visit their old school-fellows. The morale of the army in 181— was somewhat better, to be sure, than it had been a generation or so before; when Sheridan affirmed that proficiency in blasphemy and drinking, together with hatred of the French and general looseness of character, were the chief qualifications of a soldier. But a readiness to

wager money on a horse-race, or life in a duel, with or without the smallest provocation, were still regarded as essential features in his character. Betting was not so much the occasional excitement, as the daily business, of the —th Hussars: and Nicolls and Brackley, who had become thoroughly imbued with the general taste, could not refrain from indulging it among their former companions; though these could only adventure shillings and half-crowns, in lieu of the guineas and five-pound notes which were their ordinary stakes. The boys were soon found to like the excitement as much as their elders. The fashion was first set by Heath, who had always prided himself on being something of a sporting character; and who, to do him justice, really had a good seat on horseback, and was, for his years, an experienced rider. The infection soon spread from the upper to the middle forms, and from them to the smallest boys in the school; until these last had taken to staking halfpence or marbles, according to the condition of their exchequer, on every subject of interest which came within their notice.

About a fortnight previously, Brackley had paid one of his visits, and a general settlement of accounts had taken place; which, as might have been expected, had reduced many of the juvenile patrons of the turf almost to empty pockets, and some one or two to insolvency. Among those who had been brought to

the former condition was Tyrrell; who had for a long time persistently refused to partake in the mania of the day for wagers—until a cunningly devised taunt had induced him for once to depart from his resolution and adventure half a guinea, which was nearly all the money he then possessed, in a match at skittles between himself and Heath. The latter was noted for his skilful play at the game in question, which was almost unknown to Tyrrell. Nevertheless, when the former boasted in Tyrrell's hearing of his invariable success, and threw out a challenge to any boy in the school, offering to bet two to one upon himself, it was at once accepted. The match came off on the first opportunity that presented itself; and, as had been anticipated by all the bystanders, terminated in the defeat of Tyrrell, though the contest was much closer than might have been expected. The loser in fact was only defeated by his failure in the last of the nine games, which it was agreed, should be the number played; and he at once declared that he did not admit his opponent's superiority, notwithstanding the slight advantage which he had obtained over him. Heath immediately replied to this, by proposing to play the match again for the same stake whenever Tyrrell chose. The latter declined this offer, but was greatly annoyed at the sneer on Heath's face, and the smile which he observed upon every lip, as the boys heard his refusal.

"You need not look like that," he said. "I shall

have no objection to play the return match whenever I have the money to stake against Heath's. But I don't choose to bet what I have not the means of paying, if I should lose," and with this remark, which for the time at least effectually silenced his antagonist, he turned haughtily away.

The sarcasm was in truth a very telling one in the present instance. Heath was at once grasping and extravagant; two qualities which when found in combination awaken most keenly in their possessor the passion for gaming. He had caught at every wager offered by Brackley or Nicolls, which appeared to him to hold out a likelihood of gain; and, inexperienced as he of course was in the science of betting, it was no wonder that he soon involved himself to an amount, which he would be wholly unable to discharge, in event of luck going against him. The chief wagers in which he was concerned had not yet come off, when Brackley and Nicolls paid their visit; but he had lost more than a pound nevertheless, and it was fortunate for him that he had that afternoon won Tyrrell's half-guinea, or he would even then have been a defaulter.

The two young Hussars, however, would probably not have taken much account of the circumstance, even if he had been unable to settle with them. They were full of a steeple-chase, in which several of the officers of their regiment were to ride; and for which

Brackley himself had entered a horse. It was to be run in about ten days, and the entries had been completed only that morning. The Brunswickers entered into the details with more than usual eagerness; and the name of the principal favourites, Wildfire, Blucher, Drummer Boy, together with Brackley's own horse, Field Marshal, were soon banded about from lip to lip, as familiarly as though the boys had been members of the Jockey Club, or officers in the —th Hussars itself. Excitement had in fact risen so high, that a sweepstakes amounting to no less a sum than forty shillings had been got up; each subscriber paying the sum of one shilling for his ticket. There were but eight horses to run, and consequently there would be two and thirty blanks. But no one seemed to take the smallest account of this circumstance; each of the little mob being fully persuaded that the chief favourite would fall to him.

And now the time for drawing the lots had arrived, and the eager concourse, which Mr. Winter had innocently supposed to have assembled for the purpose of choosing sides for cricket or prisoner's base, had gathered together; and the drawing itself had gone on for some time, when it was discovered that by an oversight only thirty-nine names had been entered. As it had been agreed that the stakes were to be two pounds, the drawing could not be further proceeded with until the fortieth share had been paid for.

This, however, was not so easy a matter as might be supposed. It was late in the half-year; and the screw had already been somewhat freely applied, to induce some of the juniors, in whose pockets a stray shilling might chance to be left, like "the last rose of summer, all blooming alone," to make up the sum already collected. It would be a hard matter indeed to squeeze another drop out of a sponge so completely wrung out. Promises to pay at some future time there were, to be sure, in plenty; but it had been wisely resolved, that hard cash alone should be accepted.

"What a nuisance!" exclaimed Tommy Middleton, who with Bob Hunter had been constituted manager of the handicap. "I say, hasn't any fellow a bob? I would put in this moment if I had one, but I paid my last sixpence to Mother Giles this morning. Havn't you one, Hunter?"

"Not a copper," replied that youth. "Can't we borrow one of somebody?"

"Ask old Brickbats to lend you one," suggested Salter.

"Or Rawdon," added another. "He would, I am sure, if he knew what it was wanted for!"

"I have a coin here," said Hunter, producing a Waterloo medal, "which no one could value so low as half-a-crown. To oblige the company, I should'nt mind allowing it to reckon as a shilling, in the present emergency."

There was a general laugh.

"Well done, Bob!" said Middleton. "That would be generosity indeed! Still, we shouldn't like, you see, to avail ourselves of it. But doesn't any fellow really know of some one, who could lend us a shilling?"

There was a pause, and then some one said,—

"Ask little Gray; he has always lots of money, which he never spends."

"Ah, to be sure!" exclaimed several others, as they heard the suggestion.

"That is just the ticket. He hasn't put in at all, has he, Middleton?" inquired Poyntz.

"Not he; he refused, don't you remember?" answered the boy addressed. "We tried him two or three days ago, but he wouldn't have it at any price."

"Go and find him, some fellow," said Salter; "we must try if we can't succeed better with him this time."

Little Freddy Gray may perhaps be remembered by the reader, as having been the object of Joyce's persecution in a former chapter, on account of his inability, when much flurried, to pronounce the letter W. He was noted among his compeers not only for the peculiarity above-mentioned, but also for the reputed possession of a purse unusually well filled for a junior boy, as well as for a reputed unwillingness to part with its contents. However that might be, it was certain that

all attempts to induce him to fall in with the prevailing fashion of the day, and more particularly all attempts to make him take a share in the sweepstakes, had proved useless. The boys, however, were too much bent on their object to be deterred by one failure; and little inclined to be tolerant of his reasons for refusing, whatever they might be.

"Here he is," exclaimed Fox, a tall, loutish-looking boy, belonging to one of the lower classes, as he returned from the search after Gray, hauling his prisoner after him, a fair, delicate-looking little boy, with blue eyes and light auburn hair. "Here he is. Now then, young'un, do you hear, you are to put into that lottery,—to pay a shilling and draw out a ticket, do you hear?"

"Capital opportunity, Freddy, my boy," said Middleton; "you may get a heap of money without risk or expense to yourself."

"Put in a shilling," suggested Hunter, "and take out two pounds."

"Thank you, Hunter," said Gray, "I'd rather not, if you please."

"Rather not!" interposed Salter, "rather not risk one shilling to win forty? You don't mean that, to be sure, you young muff, do you?"

"I don't w-w-want to w-w-w-win your money," returned Fred.

"Nor to risk your own, hey?" observed Middleton.

"Come, Gray, don't be ill-natured," said Hunter. "We can't make up our lottery without your help. It is only a shilling, and they say you have lots of them in your purse. Can't you spare us one just for this time?"

"I don't w-w-w-want to be ill-natured," said the little boy, "but I can't put into the lottery."

"*Can't* put in!" repeated Middleton. "Why can't you, I should like to know? Answer, will you?" he added, observing the other's hesitation.

"I promised I w-w-w-wouldn't," returned Gray, with evident reluctance.

"Promised!—promised whom?"

There was no answer. But a deep flush overspread the boy's face, showing that for some reason or other the question affected him strangely.

"Don't plague him about it any more," said Hunter, goodnaturedly. "He has some reason, I can see, which he doesn't wish to tell."

"Gammon," replied Middleton, who was a good deal put out by the failure of his repeated efforts to complete the entries for the sweepstakes. "You are a good-natured fellow, Bob, but I am not to be taken in by this young humbug. I say, you fellows, I vote we send Gray to Coventry, if he persists in refusing to subscribe to what all the other fellows who had the money have paid for."

"You are not going to blubber about it, anyhow,

are you?" said Salter, who had been watching Freddy's face, and saw that it was only by a determined effort that he could restrain his tears.

"Likely enough," said Middleton, "a very little turns on the water with him. But all that goes for nothing with me. If you mean to refuse to oblige us, you had better take yourself off, do you hear?"

"Wait a moment," said Fox, "let me see if I can't persuade him to change his mind. We are not going to have our fun spoilt by a young ass like that. I say, young'un, you know this of old, I expect, don't you?" And as he spoke he drew from his pocket the well-remembered implement of torture, wherewith his former persecutor, Joyce, had been wont to annoy him. "You remember this? Joyce made me a present of it a few days before he left. I put it away in my desk, and had forgotten all about it, when I chanced, oddly enough, to light upon it this morning. It is an old acquaintance of yours; but I dare say you have no particular desire to renew your intimacy with it. No, I see you haven't! Very well then, pay up your shilling, and I will put it back into my pocket. If not,"—he added no more, but significantly brandished the article in question before the eyes of the recusant.

"Please don't, pray don't," exclaimed the frightened child, on whose memory the "iron scourge and torturing hour" had produced an impression which it would

take years perhaps to efface. "I w-w-would do anything else to oblige you, and indeed I don't w-w-want to—"

"Stop that," interrupted Middleton, "you'll do anything you're *not* asked to do, I daresay. Why can't you do what you *are* asked for?"

"I have promised," gasped Gray.

"Promised again," exclaimed Fox, angrily; "whom have you promised, you little jackass? Tell me this moment, if you don't want an inch or two of this run into you."

"Do you hear?" reiterated Middleton, "whom have you promised?"

"I would rather not say, if you don't mind very much."

"But I *do* mind very much," returned Fox. "Out with it."

The speaker was a fair specimen of a particularly odious class of boys—well known to, and dreaded alike by, schoolmasters and pupils—consisting of dull overgrown dunces who congregate in the lower classes, and avenge upon their smaller schoolfellows the ridicule and punishment which their own shortcomings bring upon themselves. They are, as a rule, the most merciless tyrants which any community produces,—unless possibly the larger animalculæ which a drop of water exhibits when seen through the hydro-oxygen microscope, may be considered to

outdo even them in respect of oppression. Yet I think that Fox himself, if he could have read and understood the thoughts which his imperious demand called up in the bosom of the little fellow before him, would have hesitated, before he insisted upon it.

Freddy Gray had been detained at home for a week or two after the conclusion of the holidays by the death of his mother. She it was who had made him promise, when she took leave of him for the last time, that he would never be induced, by the example of his schoolfellows, to lie, to swear, or to gamble. The little boy had but imperfectly apprehended the meaning of this third requirement; until it had been explained to him by the clergyman, whom Mrs. Gray had appointed to be the guardian of her son, that wagers and lotteries of all kinds were a species of gambling, which his mother had dreaded, as being likely to lead her son to ruin. It had proved—so he learned—the ruin of one who was especially dear to her, her own younger brother: therefore it was that she had been so urgent to obtain his promise, that he would always avoid it. The whole scene rose up before Freddy's eyes, as he heard Fox's question,—the room half darkened at mid-day by the doctor's order; his mother's pale, thin face, and the broken voice in which she had made her entreaty. He could not prevent one or two tears from finding their way down

his cheek. But he was resolved, come what might of it, that he would neither gratify Fox's curiosity, nor break the pledge he had given her. An older boy might perhaps fairly enough have considered, that paying a shilling to oblige his schoolfellows under such circumstances, scarcely amounted to a breach of his promise. But Freddy was too simple-minded to draw such distinctions. He had engaged not to put into lotteries, and he wouldn't.

"Now then," said Fox, after a short pause, "are you going to tell us, or do you prefer this kind of thing?" And as he spoke, he dug the spur into the calf of the boy's leg, not altogether so skilfully as his more practised predecessor had been wont to apply it, but still with sufficient effect to elicit a violent start of pain from his victim, which provoked the mirth of the bystanders.

"He felt that," said one.

"Serve him right," exclaimed another; "stick it into him again, Fox. He'll soon answer if you give him a dig or two like that."

"I'll try, at all events," responded Fox, and he was about to suit the action to the word; when all of a moment he became sensible that there was some stir among his companions, and glancing round, he saw that William Tyrrell had joined the party, and was looking quietly on. He desisted for a moment in some embarrassment.

Fox had a dislike of Tyrrell, which might have been called instinctive or idiosyncratic, or goodness knows what nowadays, were it not that he had good sound producible reasons for it, in the shape of two pretty severe thrashings which the first-class boy had administered to him. Regarding a new comer as fair game for practical joking, and little expecting to find him his superior in skill and courage, Fox had tried one or two experiments on Tyrrell's forbearance, which had resulted in his own grievous and most ignoble discomfiture. A similar thrashing, which had struck awe into all hearts, had requited some atrocious piece of ill-usage, of which one of Tyrrell's personal friends had been the subject. He seemed half-disposed to interfere in somewhat of the same manner now; for little Gray had lately been put to sleep in the same room as himself, and he regarded him therefore in some sort as under his protection.

"What is all this?" he asked coolly.

"Oh, nothing!" answered Fox, sullenly, "only young Gray here won't take a share in our sweepstakes, though he has lots of money, and knows we can't make it up without his help."

There did not seem to be anything to call for interference, and Tyrrell was turning away, when the face of the little boy caught his eye, and its expression struck him.

"Well, what then?" he said. "If he doesn't choose to put in, he needn't, I suppose?"

"He might be civil and obliging," growled Fox.

"Civil and obliging!" retorted Tyrrell, looking more narrowly at Gray. "You don't seem to have been over civil to him, I think!" He pointed to Gray's white trousers, which were spotted with blood in one or two places. "I suppose this is your doing, you brute. It would serve you right to pay you out in kind, only you are not worth the trouble. Come with me, Gray. He won't bully you again, I'll promise you!" and taking Freddy by the shoulder, he sauntered slowly away.

The Brunswickers watched his receding figure with no friendly eyes, and Fox muttered something about upstarts and humbugs, which would probably have procured him a cuff or two if they had been overheard: but Heath and Gore coming up at the moment again occasioned a diversion.

"Have any of you fellows seen Tyrrell?" asked the former. "I thought I caught sight of him a minute or two ago."

"Yonder he is," replied Middleton, pointing to a corner of the playground, where Tyrrell had now seated himself, with Gray standing near him, "and I wish he were at Jericho instead. He has just stopped our fun—"

"As he is always doing," grumbled Fox.

"We can't get any one to take the last ticket in our lottery, and I am pretty sure Gray would have done

it, if Tyrrell had left him alone. We had drawn nearly half the lots, and only found out just now that there was a shilling short."

"All the best horses are gone, I suppose?" suggested Heath.

"No, that's just the thing. Eighteen of the twenty drawn have been blanks, and all the favourites' names are still in the hat. If I had a shilling, I should be only too glad to put in myself."

"Well," said Heath, taking out his purse, "I will take the share, sooner than your sweepstakes should be spoilt. You draw for me, Tommy, and come and tell me presently about it. I can't stay now, for I want to speak to Tyrrell."

The boys were too much pleased at having attained their object, to enter into any criticism of Heath's motives, and the drawing of the lots was immediately recommenced. There were, as has been already stated, eight horses entered. Of these the three most in favour were Wildfire, Blucher, and Field Marshal; the first two being generally preferred in the sporting world; the last having a special interest attaching to him as Brackley's horse. One by one the boys advanced to where Middleton was sitting, and dipping their hands in the hat, drew forth each his lot. A medley of eager exclamations ensued.

"Mine is a blank." "So is mine—what a bore." "Mine is Lord Exmouth; I'll sell him to you for

a shilling." "Thank you for nothing; he is not worth a penny. Brackley said he hadn't a ghost of a chance." "What have you drawn, Poyntz?" "Doctor Bolus." "I'll change Ladybird for Doctor Bolus." "No, no, they say Ladybird won't run." "I've drawn Drummer Boy; who will give me five bob for Drummer Boy?" "No one, I should think; the odds are fifteen to one against him!" "Hurrah, I've got Blucher." "Wish you joy, he is the prime favourite!" "Who has got the other favourites?" inquired Middleton, as soon as it was possible for his voice to be heard.

"I have drawn Field Marshal," said Hunter.

"I congratulate you," said Poyntz; "I heard Brackley say he had bet high on him."

"He is Brackley's horse," said Middleton, with a smile. "Still I believe he has a fair chance. But who has Wildfire?"

"I have Wildfire," said one of the junior boys.

"You are a lucky fellow. The knowing ones say it lies between her and Blucher. And who has the remaining horse, Crabtree?"

No one answered.

"That's strange," said Hunter; "some one must have it, I suppose. Let us look again. Why, Tom, they haven't all drawn. Here is one ticket still in the hat. Look through the list of names again."

"I called them all, I am certain," said Middleton, "and they are all marked off on the paper."

"What number did you draw for Heath?" asked Salter.

"By Jove, I forgot to draw for him at all," exclaimed Middleton. "I didn't put his name down, you know; that's how it happened."

"That's it," said Hunter. "Then this lot of course belongs to him; and equally of course it is Crabtree. Well, Tom, I suppose Heath won't be over well pleased to hear that, as the odds are twenty to one against the horse. However, we shall know all by this time to-morrow."

"Not by this time to-morrow," said Middleton. "Don't you know that they can't run the race to-morrow morning? It is put off."

"When did you hear that?" asked Hunter.

"Oh, a day or two ago. An order from the Horse Guards had come down, I believe, which interfered with it. But it is to be run as soon as possible,—in a day or two, I have no doubt. Well, as this matter is concluded, I suppose we may now choose sides for our game at rounders."

"Shan't you tell Heath first?"

"No, I think not. Heath is very busy there with Gore, and as the race is not to come off for some time, there is no hurry. Besides, his horse hasn't the slightest chance. I'll tell him some other time."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

AS Heath and Gore moved away from the group gathered round Middleton's seat, a paper was put into the hand of the first-named boy by one of the school servants.

"Where did you get this from, Tom?" asked Heath, carelessly.

"A soldier chap brought it," replied Tom. "I expect he's Muster Brackley's servant. Leastways he's been once or twice over here with messages from him."

"Brackley!" exclaimed Heath, with a sudden change of manner. He turned hurriedly aside into a corner of the playground and tore open the envelope. Gore could not see his face, but he guessed from his attitude and manner that the contents of the note were of no agreeable character. A minute or two afterwards this impression was confirmed; when Heath, having regained his composure, joined him again.

"Gore," he said, drawing him aside, "the steeplechase is over. They have run it this morning."

"This morning!" exclaimed Gore, in surprise. "Why I thought it was put off for some days."

"Yes, so Brackley said in his letter," replied Heath. "But it appears from what he now tells me, that some of the officers are under orders to leave immediately, and if they did not have it at once, they could not have it at all. So they settled last night that they would get it over this morning."

"And who has won?" inquired Gore, eagerly, "Blucher or Wildfire?"

"Neither the one nor the other, I am sorry to say," was the answer.

"Neither the one nor the other! who then? not Field Marshal, to be sure!"

"No, not Field Marshal either. An outsider, whom nobody had the least idea of. An old horse called Crabtree."

"Crabtree! you don't mean it; why the odds were fifteen or sixteen to one against him, weren't they?"

"Twenty," I believe, answered Heath; "but he has won, nevertheless."

"Why how could it have happened? what became of the favourites—of Blucher, for instance?"

"Blucher went head over ears, jockey and all, into the brook. How that came about, I can't say. But he didn't scramble out again till too late to make any further running."

"And Wildfire and Field Marshal and Drummer Boy?" said Gore.

"Wildfire was first, but fell at the last fence.

Crabtree beat Drummer Boy by just one length. Field Marshal refused the first fence two or three times, and lost so much ground, that he couldn't recover it. Brackley thinks he might have won if he had been properly ridden."

"I suppose that's only his fancy, isn't it?"

"No, I don't think so. I saw Field Marshal last winter, and rode him several times. He mayn't be all Brackley thinks him; but he is a fine powerful well-bred horse nevertheless. I am inclined to think that he must have been badly ridden, or he would have beaten any but the best horses at all events. Brackley is rather down in the mouth. He says he has lost a lot of money."

"Lost! why, Heath, he has backed the field against Wildfire and Blucher, hasn't he?"

"Yes, with us. But his bets with the fellows here are mere trifles to his other wagers. He says in his note that what he wins from the Brunswickers is pretty nearly all he has to set off against his other losses."

"They may be trifles to him, but they are no trifles to me," growled Gore, who seemed greatly disturbed by the news. "It is no trifle to me to lose a guinea, when I have only ten and sixpence to pay it with. If you hadn't told me"——

"There, none of that," interrupted Heath. "I only told you what I thought, and I shouldn't have told you anything, if you hadn't asked me. And as for

sing—I have lost more than you have, I expect. I ad a bet with Brackley of a guinea, and I have two thers with Robinson and Billy Waters of five shillings ach, as well as one of half a crown with Salter. I aven't more than five shillings in my purse. So you nay judge which of us has the most to complain of."

"I don't want to blame you," said Gore, sulkily. "I only want to know what is to be done. I'd sooner cut my throat than face Brackley if I hadn't the money."

"Well, I will tell you what I think, if you will be reasonable. You see it is quite clear that we can't pay Brackley—not now, at all events."

"Does he ask us in his letter to pay up?" inquired Gore.

"Well, he assumes that we shall send him the money. But we needn't. We may"——

"It would be of no use trying that," interrupted Gore, pettishly. "He would be sure to ride over again before he leaves the neighbourhood. That cock won't fight."

"What cock?" asked the other quietly.

"Saying nothing about the wagers, in the hope that he won't say anything, if we don't. It would be no use trying that on."

"I never intended to try it on," returned Heath. "I was going to tell you that Brackley offers us double or quits on the Alphabet match, if we like to take it."

"The Alphabet match! He backs the first half of the Alphabet then, I suppose?"

"The first half! what, when betting with us, both of whom play in the A eleven? That would be making us bet against our own side. No, he offers of course to back the second half. But the point is, that he proposes an even bet, instead of requiring odds.

"What, he can't know that Rivers has left then! The N's wouldn't have so much the worst of the sides, if it hadn't been for that."

"Rivers had left a day or two before Brackley was here—before the last time that he was here, that is," said Heath.

"Yes, but I don't think anything was said about it to Brackley. I was with him nearly all the time he was here, and I am pretty sure it was not mentioned."

"Perhaps it wasn't," said Heath, coolly; "but that is no business of ours. We are not bound to tell him. But you see, Gore, now that Rivers is gone, the N's have very little chance. Rivers was the best bowler not only on their side, but in the school, as well as their best bat. They have literally no bowling now; and all the good bats, excepting Robinson and Stapleton, are on our side."

"You are forgetting Tyrrell, are you not?"

"Tyrrell! bother him. So I was. He wasn't here, you see, last year, and I was reckoning by the old

scores. But he can't be as good as Rivers,—not nearly."

"Well, I am not so sure of that. He only played once last autumn, and wasn't very successful, certainly. But they said he was shy, or out of sorts, or something. Billy Waters, who saw him play at a swell match somewhere last summer, says he is a regular dab at it. I wish his name hadn't begun with a T."

"I wish he hadn't come to Martin's Green," said Heath. "Indeed I wish he had never been born, for the matter of that. But that is nothing to the purpose now. Do you think our half of the Alphabet is safe to win, as the sides stand?"

"Well, I do not. We have much the best chance, no doubt. You, I, Hall, Fellowes, Robinson, and Bishop are all that remain of the old eleven, now that Rivers is gone; and five of the six belong to the first half of the Alphabet. We have also Middleton, Jenkins, and Earle, who will probably be put in the school eleven this year. On their side there is no one who can play really well, except Stapleton and Robinson; and Walker, Wells, and Pocock tolerably good. But then there is Tyrrell, who I am afraid may turn out a very awkward customer. And, by the bye, there is another new fellow, Young, who they say bowls nicely. But he only came this half, and no one has seen him play."

"Young, hey?" said Heath. "Why he is quite a

child, not above ten or eleven years old, I should think."

"He is short for his age, I fancy. Still I don't suppose he can be very much. No, if Tyrrell were not to play, we should be cock sure of winning; but hardly, if he does."

"Plague take him!" said Heath. "Are there no means of preventing him from playing, I wonder?"

"As what?" asked Gore in some surprise.

"Oh, there *are* means of managing such things sometimes," replied Heath. "A fellow is sometimes persuaded not to play, or if he does play, not to do his best. That sort of thing is done sometimes. I know it is."

"Perhaps, but not in a school like this. I should like to see any one propose such a thing to Tyrrell. And besides the N's would of course insist on his playing."

"They couldn't make him play, if he didn't choose," said Heath. "But I agree with you that Tyrrell, who is as proud as Lucifer himself, would never consent to anything of the kind, even if any one should suggest it to him. But something may occur to prevent his playing nevertheless. When is the Alphabet match to be played?"

"Brickbats is to be asked to let us go out on the green next week, and, I have no doubt, will give leave this afternoon. It has always been the custom, you

know, to begin the Alphabet match, which is the first match of the season, on the first half-holiday after the leave is given. So that next Thursday—this day week—would be the regular day."

"Thursday—this day week. Very good. Well, Gore, I had better write and close with Brackley's offer. The chances are that we shall win, whether Tyrrell plays or not. And any way, if we don't accept his proposal, he will expect to be paid at once. What do you say?"

"Well, I suppose you had," said Gore, reluctantly. "I don't like it, but it can't be helped. I suppose we are not *bound* to tell about Rivers"——

"That's settled, then," interrupted Heath. "Well now, Gore, another thing. How about that return match at skittles?—the match with Tyrrell, I mean. I want to play it soon, and I want you to come with us as umpire—you and Billy Waters."

"The skittle match at Giles's? Oh, yes. But you know Tyrrell refused to play that, until he had enough money to pay the stakes, in case he should lose. Don't you remember what he said?"

"I remember well enough," said Heath, sharply. "I recollect all that passed. First of all, he wouldn't play at skittles at all for money. And we had to chaff him no end, about that being only a pretence to escape being beaten after all his boasting. Then he found out that old Giles's house was a hundred yards

or so out of bounds, and wouldn't go there again now he knew it; and there was a second chaff over that. And then, he hadn't the money to pay the stakes, if he should lose, and wouldn't play till he had. Guess he felt tolerably sure he should lose, though his confounded pride made him stand out to the contrary."

"Well, but you recollect," urged Gore, "that with all your chaff you couldn't get over that third objection: and I don't think you will be more likely to succeed now. It is of no use trying it on, in my judgment, until he has got the money he talked about. And that he won't get this half. He is a deal too proud to ask his father for more money: and if he were to ask, his father is as poor as a church mouse, and couldn't or wouldn't give it him. One of his near neighbours told my father so."

"Very true," said Heath, "but I happen to know that Tyrrell got a tip of half a guinea to-day from an uncle or a cousin, or a relation of some kind, who came to see him. Fox saw the money handed over to him, and told me of it after school."

"Half a guinea! What a jolly piece of luck for you! Well, now he can't refuse to play that return match. You had better have it out at once, before he spends it some other way. But, Heath," added Gore, after a slight pause, "do you think it is quite—quite fair—when we know he can't play as well, you know—I really almost doubt"——

"He *chooses* to play," returned Heath, with the same coolness with which he had spoken throughout. "He knows, as well as you or I do, that he can't play as well as I can; but he chooses to play me notwithstanding. It is his own fault, if he loses, and I don't see that we need trouble ourselves about him. I am of your mind, that it will be better to lose no time in playing this match out. By the bye, Gore, there will be no need to say anything about the steeple-chase to-night. They don't expect to hear anything for a day or two, so they won't be disappointed. We had better keep out of their way to-night, or they will be asking questions (and probably want to be paid their wagers immediately," he added, inwardly). "They will be sure to hear it by to-morrow morning's post, and that will be soon enough. And now let us go and see what we can do with Tyrrell."

While Gore and Heath are engaged in their insidious enterprise, we will offer a few words of explanation.

Dick Giles, to whom reference has been made in the above conversation, did not keep a public-house, notwithstanding the skittle-ground. Nor did he allow that his calling was that of a poacher, or of a smuggler. No conviction had ever been obtained against him before the magistrates, either for the unlawful sale of beer and spirits on his premises; or of hares and pheasants; or again, of silk handkerchiefs and lace. But the constables had very strong suspicions that the

wary old rogue drove a very considerable trade in all the above-mentioned articles; and for the last year or two, had been on the *qui vive* to catch him tripping if they could. His house did not bear a very creditable character, and the Doctor had interdicted all connection with him. Probably that fact constituted his main attraction in the eyes of the boys. If that was not the magnet which drew them to his house, it was hard to understand what it was. His ginger-beer and tarts—his ostensible trade was that of keeping a cake-shop—were higher in price and worse in quality than those of his neighbours, and he charged what they knew to be an inordinate hire for the use of his skittle-ground. They might almost have bought a set of skittles of their own, for what half a dozen visits to his alley cost them. Nor again were old Giles and his wife remarkable for civility to their customers. But the thing was forbidden; and there was *caviare* in that consideration, that gave piquancy to viands and amusements, which would otherwise have been savourless enough.

Among other modes of ridding the boys of their superfluous cash, Mrs. Giles had devised the expedient of cooking up on the afternoons of half-holidays, a compound, to which she audaciously gave the name of hare-soup, and for which she charged one shilling a plate. Doubtless it is possible that the soup was, now and then, correctly named; for Giles sometimes found in the traps, which he had been prevented by some

accident from visiting, dead hares, which were no longer saleable to his customers. But in general the neighbours observed a disappearance of cats coincident with the soup-makings; which was, to say the least of it, highly suggestive. However that may have been, one thing is certain, that the Brunswickers accounted a visit to Dick Giles's alley as well worth the risk which it entailed, and a basin of the titular hare-soup as more than an equivalent for the shilling paid for it. Thither it was that Heath had induced Tyrrell to repair—the latter being ignorant at the time that Giles's alley was out of bounds, and thither he was now bent on beguiling him again.

He had more difficulty than he had anticipated in carrying out his purpose. Tyrrell had in the interim become more intimate with Mr. Winter; who had discerned the finer qualities, as well as the weaknesses, of his character; and had gained a good deal of influence over him. Heath's platitudes about honourable feeling and the usages of gentlemen were coldly disputed or contemptuously left unanswered by Tyrrell. It was only when he was reminded that a positive engagement—which he was now called upon to make good—had been entered on, to play a return match, whenever he might become possessed of the money required for the stakes, that he at last gave his consent.

"Very well," he said after a pause, during which his pride had struggled with, and mastered his con-

science, "very well. If I promised positively that I would play this game, I will do so. I do not remember my own words with sufficient clearness to speak positively, and I must take your report and Gore's. But I beg you to understand that when this match is over, I don't intend to play again."

"As you please about that," said Heath. "But if the game is to be played, we must go at once. There will be time this afternoon; but if we let this opportunity pass, there will probably not be another for a long time to come."

"I am ready," answered Tyrrell, coldly. "Perhaps you will fetch me my hat, Gray," he continued, addressing the little boy who had followed his patron, and was still sitting under the shadow, as it were, of his protection—contemplating him with that undiluted veneration, which has no parallel in after life, unless it be found in the mixture of awe and affection, wherewith the devotee regards his patron saint.

Freddy jumped eagerly up and ran into the house, returning so expeditiously with the hat, that Tyrrell had to wait some minutes before the appearance of the elder boy. He was pleased with the little fellow's eagerness to serve him, and addressed for the first time a word or two to him.

"Well, Gray, so you wouldn't put into the lottery! You don't like lotteries, eh?"

"No," said Freddy, timidly; "they are very wrong things, ain't they?"

"Well, I don't choose to have anything to do with them either," returned Tyrrell, good-humouredly. "So you see we are of the same opinion."

"I am glad of that," said Gray, in a more assured tone. "I didn't want to seem ill-natured or unkind to the other boys. But it would be better to be unkind than to break one's promise, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, to be sure," answered Tyrrell, amused at his earnestness.

"Do you know," continued Gray, whose confidence was quite won by the friendliness of his older companion, and was anxious to be assured that he had acted rightly. "Do you know that I wasn't *quite* certain whether I ought to refuse. I had promised" —his voice faltered a little—"I had promised dear mamma that I would never lay wagers or play games for money. It is very wrong to do so, isn't it?"

"Many people think so," said Tyrrell, with some awkwardness of manner. "But—but there are other persons, who are of a different opinion, and—don't see any harm, I believe."

"Well, but if one has given a promise to any one, never to wager or play for money, it would certainly be wrong then, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, yes, of course," answered the other, a little impatiently.

"I am so glad you think so," pursued Freddy, not noticing the other's altered tone, "because, if it hadn't been downright wrong, I should have liked to oblige

them. Mr. Winter told me always to oblige my schoolfellows when I could do so, unless there was something wrong. But he said if they did propose anything wrong, it would be weak and cowardly to mind what they said."

Tyrrell looked hard at his little companion. Could it be possible that he was talking at him?

"He said," continued Gray, following the thread of his own thoughts, rather than addressing Tyrrell—"he said, I remember, that 'to be talked into doing what people knew to be wrong, because other people said it would be unkind, or cowardly, or mean, not to do it, was always wickedness'—no, he didn't say that—'was always weakness, and generally wickedness'—yes, that was it—'always weakness and generally wickedness.' Should I have been wicked, do you think, or only weak, Tyrrell, if I had put into the lottery?"

He looked up anxiously for an answer; but was at once astonished and repelled by the expression of the elder boy's face.

"I haven't time to settle the point," he said, curtly, as he got up to join Heath, who was now advancing towards him. "I advise you not to talk quite so much about yourself, youngster, or you may happen to get laughed at." So saying, he took Heath's offered arm, and the two vanished through the playground gates together; leaving poor little Gray utterly crushed and confounded by the rebuke he had received.

"Gore and Stapleton will follow us in a minute or two," said Heath. "They are to be umpires at our match. You don't mind that, I suppose?"

"Not in the least," replied Tyrrell. "But I wish to warn you before we go further, that I will only play to the amount of the money which I have in my purse. Now, I have just twelve and sixpence. There will be the hire of the skittle alley, won't there?"

"Yes, and a plate of soup we generally take when Giles has any," said Heath, "which costs, with what we give mother Giles, eighteen pence, and the alley may be three and sixpence at most."

"That will be five shillings altogether. You are sure that will cover everything?"

"Quite sure," said Heath. "So we may play our match, or rather our batch of matches, for seven-and-sixpence, you know. That will quite suit me." The reader will remember this was precisely the sum he required to pay the two or three small wagers, which he made with his schoolfellows on the steeple-chase.

"Just so," said Tyrrell. "I have no objection to make; and you quite understand also, that whatever may be the event of this match, it is the last which I shall play at Giles's alley?"

"You will please yourself about that, as I have already told you," replied Heath, in an offended tone. "Here are Gore and Stapleton just behind us. Shall we wait for them?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GAME AT SKITTLES.

"IS your alley disengaged?" inquired Gore, as the four boys entered Giles's cottage.

"Yes, Mr. Gore," replied the old man, who was seated in his chimney-corner, watching a pot, which was simmering on the fire, "the alley is disengaged, leastways, that is, for them as can pay for it."

"All right," said Gore, "this time at all events. Isn't it, Tyrrell?"

Old Giles's remark was meant partly as a joke, partly as sober earnest; for it had occasionally happened that the purses of his juvenile customers had fallen short, when the bill was brought in. Tyrrell did not relish either aspect of it.

"It is not my practice," he said, in a constrained voice, "to hire what I can't pay for. If you don't wish to let us your skittle-ground," he continued, turning to Giles, "I am sure I for one do not wish to use it."

"No offence, master, I hope," said Giles, on whom Tyrrell's words and manner had produced a marked effect. "It will be all'us at your sarvice. I knows

as you are a genelman born and bred; and a genelman all'us pays like a genelman, if so be as he *is* a genelman."

"There, that will do, Giles," interposed Billy Waters. "It is all right, you may depend upon it. And what have you got here in this pot of yours? Hare soup, hey? It seems to smell like it."

"Yes, Muster Stapleton, and as good soup, too, as ever you ate. Why, I cotched—that is," corrected Mr. Giles, in some confusion—"I bought this hare the day afore yesterday, and it is as fine a one as I ever see'd. My missus, says she, 'I dessay as some of them young gents from Brunsick House 'ull be a coming here on Thursday, and I should like to have things comfable for them, if they does come.' She knows your tastes, you see, young gents; and so she put the pot on afore dinner, and the soup 'ull be ready by the time as you've done your game, if so be as you likes a sup of it."

"Very considerate, I am sure," said Billy. "What do you say, you fellows—shall we patronise the soup which Mrs. Giles has been so considerate as to provide for us?"

"Let us have it by all means," said Heath. "I always make a point of having some—that is, whenever there is any to be had."

"And so do I," said Gore. "Let us have the soup, and some tarts afterwards, Giles. And now I

advise you two fellows to set about your match, for the afternoon is getting on."

The four boys proceeded to the skittle alley; and Gore having undertaken to keep the score, and Stapleton to set up the pins, the first game was commenced.

The contest was determined more speedily and decisively than even the bystanders had expected. Possibly Heath had forborne from putting out all his skill at the former trial, wishing his opponent to believe himself more nearly his match than was really the case. Possibly again he was anxious to mortify Tyrrell, in revenge for his refusal, expressed in no very flattering terms, to repeat the encounter when the present trial was decided; and being so stimulated, played with more attention than usual. But any way the issue of the match was never doubtful for a moment. Heath won every game apparently with the utmost ease, frequently knocking over three and sometimes four pins at a single throw, while his antagonist could never succeed in scoring more than one, and sometimes missing altogether. This latter mishap, however, did not occur till after the loss of the first three games, when Tyrrell, who had grown more and more provoked by his ill success, had at length lost all control of his temper, and threw the ball with a recklessness, which would have been fatal to his chance of success, if he had been a far better

player than Heath himself. When the fifth game had terminated, as the four previous contests had, in his utter defeat, he flung down the ball with an irritation, which, to do him justice, he very rarely displayed.

"I never saw such luck as you have in my life, Heath. You must allow that that last toss, when all four went down, was nothing but the merest chance. And this new ball, too! It is twice as heavy as the old one, and the clumsiest thing I ever saw. It is impossible to play properly with it!"

"A bad workman always finds fault with his tools," said Heath. "I found it all right. But the truth is, that you haven't a good eye for distance, Tyrrell. I would wager you couldn't hit anything with a stone or a ball that wasn't pretty close at hand."

"I would engage to hit your stumps with a cricket ball, at all events," retorted the other.

"That remains to be seen," said Heath. "But even if you did, that wouldn't prove that you had naturally what I call a good eye. A fellow may acquire bowling by long practice. I dare say if you played constantly at skittles, you would learn in time to hit them right enough. I only say you wouldn't do it easily or without long practice: whereas a fellow who had a correct eye, would hit a mark without difficulty."

"I would undertake to hit anything you put up

at ten yards off, with a stone, practice or no practice," said Tyrrell, angrily.

"Oh, would you?" returned the other. "I will believe that when I see it."

Tyrrell was on the point of making a still more angry assertion, when Billy Waters interposed.

"Don't say any more about it," he said, in an under tone; "Heath wants to provoke you for some reason or other. I can see that plainly enough. The best way of dealing with him is to leave him alone. I know him of old. Come," he added, in a louder voice, "here is mother Giles's soup all ready on the table. Don't let it get cold, I say."

"Come along," said Gore, and the others following, the party were soon seated round Giles's pembroke table, each with a basin of soup before him.

"Didn't I hear you two fellows talking of cricket?" remarked Stapleton, perceiving that the conversation was inclined to flag. "Were you talking of the Alphabet match? when is it to come off?"

"No," said Heath, who wished, for his own reasons, to avoid the subject, "we weren't speaking of any match. We were talking about throwing cricket balls. How far have you ever seen a fellow throw a cricket ball, Billy?"

"He said this with the intention of diverting notice from the cricket match in question. But Tyrrell had now recovered his self-command, and was

anxious to atone for his petulance by civility to his companions. Turning to Stapleton, therefore, he inquired, with an air of interest, what the Alphabet match was, and when it was played.

"Oh, don't you know?" replied Billy. "Ah, I forgot that this is your first summer at Martin's Green. The Alphabet match is always played at the beginning of the cricket season. All the fellows whose names begin with any letter from A to M belong to one side; and those whose names begin with the letters from N to Z, on the other. It is in most years a very good match; but this time I expect our side will get properly thrashed."

"A to M, and N to Z," repeated Tyrrell. "Well, then, if I play"—

"*If* you play! Of course you will play," interrupted Stapleton. "You are just about our only chance."

"Well, then, I shall belong of course to the N-Z eleven—to your side, Stapleton."

"Yes, to be sure—you will be one of our bowlers; our only bowler, in fact, unless little Young turns out better than I can possibly hope. I wonder no one has told you of it before."

"Who is captain?" asked Tyrrell.

"Robinson. He is captain by seniority. Captain of our side, that is. Heath here is captain of the A's."

"I should think it would be very good fun," said

Tyrrell, who was rejoiced at the notion of finding himself again in antagonism with Heath, and with some prospect of turning the tables upon him.

"It would be, if we had anything like a chance of winning," returned Stapleton; "but as it is, the match will, I am afraid, be like the handle of the jug —'all on one side,' that is to say."

"If you have done your soup," interposed Heath, "I think we had better settle the account and go home. It is getting late."

His scheme had been to pique Tyrrell into declaring that he would never play any match of any kind in future, in which he, Heath, was concerned. Had he succeeded in doing this before Tyrrell had heard anything about the Alphabet match, he felt little doubt, that he would have considered himself bound to take no part in it. Billy Waters had inadvertently upset his scheme; first, by stopping the altercation between himself and his antagonist, and secondly, by the information he had given him about the game in question. Some other mode must be tried now, if Tyrrell was to be deterred from playing. Heath felt a good deal vexed as he reflected on this, and his remark was intended partly to give vent to his vexation, and partly to give a hint to Tyrrell that he would be glad to have the stakes paid over to him.

In this at least he was successful. Tyrrell no sooner heard his suggestion, than he took out his

purse and handed the amount agreed on, seven and sixpence, over to him. Then calling to Giles, he desired that the charges for the hire of the alley, and the eatables of which they had partaken, should be brought in, so that he might forthwith pay for his share of them.

"Will you toss head or tail, whether you shall pay for my soup, or I for yours?" asked Gore of Heath.

"Done with you," said Heath, skilfully pitching up one of the half-crowns which he had just received from Tyrrell. "Heads or tails, Gore? Tails, hey? Tails it is, I declare. What a nuisance!"

"Shall we toss which pays for both?" asked Stapleton of Tyrrell. "I am game if you are."

"No, have a shy for it," suggested Gore, rather maliciously. "Tyrrell says he can hit a mark with a stone at ten yards off, and I should like to see him do it."

"Don't, Gore," said Stapleton. "Don't go on like that. There has been enough said already."

"Enough! what do you mean?" returned Gore. "I have said nothing that I know of."

"I didn't say that *you* had," remarked Stapleton.

"And pray what have I said then?" inquired Heath.

"Well, if you ask me, I think you have been trying to provoke Tyrrell nearly all the time we have been here. I don't think it is fair, I must say."

"I don't mind them, I assure you," said Tyrrell. "If they wish to see whether I can do what I said I could, I have no objection to satisfy them."

Stapleton would have again remonstrated, but he saw that Tyrrell was determined to prove that he had not been making an idle boast. So the boys once more adjourned to the skittle-alley, leaving the old couple in doors—old Giles asleep in his chair before the fire; and his wife, who was stone deaf, engaged in the laborious task, to her, of making out the bill.

A fragment of an earthenware jug was soon found and elevated on the top of a clothes post, which stood at the further end of the yard. It was agreed that Tyrrell and Stapleton should each have six throws, and the one who should hit the mark the greatest number of times should be the winner. If neither hit the mark, or if they made the same number of hits, they were to advance two paces nearer and throw again. Tyrrell had the first turn. He selected his stones carefully, and took unusual pains with his aim; for Heath's insinuations had galled him more than he liked to acknowledge even to himself. The result quite justified the pretensions he had advanced. Three times the pebbles grazed the sides of the jug, and once knocked a piece off the spout. He had just performed this latter feat much to his own satisfaction, and, as he felt sure, to the secret mortification of his adversaries, when a loud crash was heard on the other

side of the courtyard wall, and the next instant a head appeared above it. The Brunswickers at once recognized it as belonging to one Jem Rogers, a boy employed to do odd jobs for Giles and his wife; and very odd jobs some of them were reputed to be.

"Hallo there," exclaimed this functionary, "dost thee know what thee'st been a doing of with they stones? Thee'st smashed t' dairy window, and t' big pot of treacle, and a sight o' jam pots. T' treacle ha' run all over measter's best cwoat as were hanging on a chair under t' shelf. Measter, measter, coom out! Thy best cwoat is all soaked thro', and t' missus's jam pots is broke."

Old Giles, roused from his slumbers by the unwonted sounds, hurried forth from the cottage, followed by his wife, who had at length succeeded in producing a legible copy of the bill. Dire was the wrath of the old man, when Jem Rogers, holding up his Sunday garment, whilom of a light blue colour, displayed the deplorable piebald aspect to which the stains of treacle had reduced it; and furious as the howlings of a she-bear bereaved of her whelps, were the lamentations of Mrs. Giles over her shattered jam pots. The boys, startled at first at the catastrophe, were soon struck by the absurdity of the scene: and their peals of unrestrained laughter, in which Tyrrell himself could not forbear joining, increased the anger of the injured couple to such a

degree, that old Giles, seizing his stick, seemed to be on the point of commencing an onslaught on the offenders, when Tyrrell, who had now recovered his composure, addressed him—

"I am very sorry, Mr. Giles," he said. "None of us knew that there was anything which could be broken, on the other side of the wall; or of course I should not have shied the stones in that direction. But if you will tell me what is the cost of the damage I have done, I shall be quite ready to pay for it."

"Damage thee hast done!" bellowed old Giles. "Dost thee see this here cwoat, as 'ud ha' lasted me this four year good, and as aint fit now to be hung on a scarecrow in a barley field? Dost thee know as t'were bowt new only last Fair time"——

"No, indeed he doesn't," interposed Stapleton, "and I don't know how he should, Giles."

Giles wheeled sharply round at the sound of Stapleton's voice; unpleasantly aware that he was engaged in a more formidable encounter than he had bargained for; much as a footpad might feel, who, fancying that he has none but unarmed travellers to deal with, is saluted all of a moment by a loaded pistol pointed full in his face.

"This cwoat not new, Mr. Stapleton?" he stammered.

"No, that coat is *not* new, Mr. Giles. How should it be new when you have worn it for the

degree, that old Giles seizing his stick, seemed to be on the point of commencing an onslaught on the offenders, when Tyrrell, who had now recovered his composure, addressed him—

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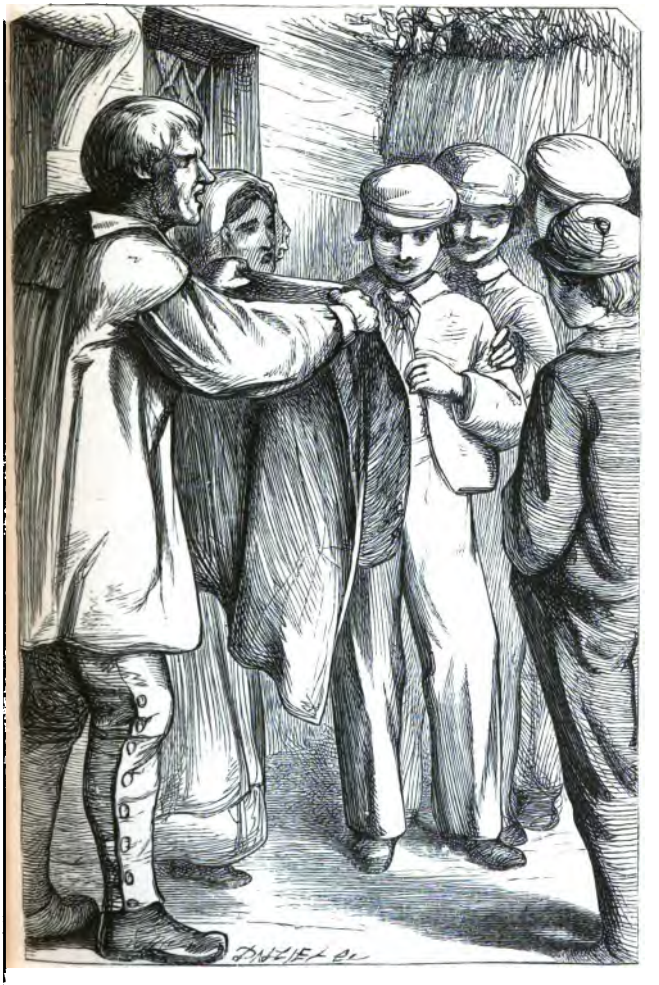
"No. [illegible] not new, Mr. Giles. How should it [illegible] you have worn it for the



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last three years at least to my certain knowledge! Why, I could make my davy, that I remember those buttons and that patch on the elbow, the first half I came to Martin's Green. Don't try that on. It won't fit."

"You's mistaken, Mr. Stapleton," persisted Giles, "and anyhow it would ha' been as good a cwoat as I should ha' needed for four or five year to come. You can't go for to deny that."

"Four years to come!" repeated Billy Waters, with great disdain. "Why, you won't last four years yourself, Giles, unless you mend your ways. You'll be shot for a poacher, or hanged as a receiver of stolen goods before the time is half up!"

And here I must delay my story awhile to remark, that any one who does not desire to be utterly and ignominiously put down, had better not provoke a verbal contest with a sixth-form boy. The author of "Tom Brown" has recorded his opinion that a gentleman commoner in his first year at the University is the most impudent animal in creation; and Captain Marryat has somewhere or other claimed the palm in this department, for a midshipman who has been a year or two at sea. But *meo periculo* I affirm that the upper boys at a large school will be found more than a match for either of the champions above named. I was rowing down the Thames once in company with a friend, who a few years before had

been an Eton boy—as quiet and well-spoken a youth as the ancient university contained. As our wherries glided along near the towers of Windsor, we accidentally disturbed some fishing-lines, which an individual, whom my friend generically termed "a cad," was engaged in setting. The man, a surly, bargee-looking fellow, began to abuse us without stint or mercy, threatening us with the direst retribution if we were only men enough to come ashore, and fight him. I was anxious to row on with all speed, and leave the unsavoury orator to his solitude again. But to my great surprise, my quiet-looking friend rested on his oars, and poured such a broadside of Eton slang into the enemy, as fairly silenced his guns, and we rowed away triumphant. "A gentleman," remarked the victor, as he contemplated his discomfited adversary, "can always beat a snob at anything; even at slang, if he gives his mind to it."

I suppose Mr. Giles, in conformity with the above theory, must have been aware that he laboured under educational disadvantages, and was unwilling to enter the lists with Stapleton. At all events he succumbed as ignominiously as the Eton bargee, and from threats and bluster descended at once to entreaty.

"Poaching, Mr. Stapleton, and stolen goods, sir! I am sure as I knows nuffin of either of they, and I knows as you're not the genelman to go to take a man's cracter from him. And as for this here cwoat,

sir, I can't afford to lose it, for it is my best anyway, and the jam and the treacle, too. We can't make our tarts, you see"——

"Cut it short, Giles," said the remorseless Stapleton; "Mr. Tyrrell is willing, as he has already told you, to pay for what he has broken. There's two squares of glass, say half a crown a-piece" (Billy Waters was learned in assessing this article, having been many a time obliged to pay for its demolition), "and six jam pots at sixpence a-piece"——

"Sixpence a piece, Mr. Stapleton!" remonstrated Mr. Giles. "Each of 'em 'ud make a dozen tarts, as we should charge"——

"I dare say you would," returned Billy, "and what is more, I dare say you still will charge it; for half the jam may still be used. And you know they don't cost you above sixpence each, if as much. And there is the big treacle-pot; holds six pounds perhaps—half a crown for that, too; and last there is the coat. Well, an old clothesman would have given ten shillings for it, if he had been liberal."

"Ten shillings!" shouted Giles, fairly roused out of his submission by this extremity of depreciation, "ten shillings for my best Sunday cwoat! Why I give two guineas and half for it, sir. I did, as sure as I stand here."

"Your father did, you mean, Giles, not you. However, I dare say Mr. Tyrrell will pay a guinea, and it is very handsome if he does."

"'Tain't enough," growled the old man, "but if so be as the young gent won't pay no more, I s'pose I must take that. That makes two guineas altogether, don't it, sir?"

"No, it don't," answered Stapleton, "only a guinea and a half."

"A guinea and a half is it? Well any ways I hopes as Mr. Tyrrell, if so be as that is the genelman's name, will come down handsome with the money—on the nail, as they says. I be a poor man, and it ain't like as tho' I could afford to wait."

Tyrrell felt very uncomfortable, as he listened to this conversation; of course he must pay the amount assessed. It rather annoyed him to hear his friend disputing with Mr. Giles on the subject at all; though doubtless it was kindly meant. He would rather have paid whatever was asked, and have done with it. But it was one thing to wish this, and another to do it. He had but five shillings in his purse; out of which he had to settle for the soup, as well as for his share of the hire of the ground. There would probably not remain more than half a crown after these had been paid for. How was he to get the remaining one pound nine shillings, which he would require, in order to satisfy Giles's demand? Yet here was the man insisting in a manner on immediate payment; and it was not at all clear that he would consent to wait even a few days for it.

Giles saw his embarrassment, and turning to Heath, who was leaning against the cottage wall, looking on with malicious satisfaction, inquired in a low voice, whether he thought the young gent might be trusted. "I knows as you wouldn't go for to deceive a poor man, Mr. Heath," he said, "least ways an old friend like me. You see I knows nuffin on him 'cept as he 's a 'quaintance of yourn; and thirty shilling and more is no trifle, mind you. Do you think as my money's safe, if I leaves 'un alone?"

"Don't let me prejudice you against him," returned Heath, in an equally cautious tone. "But if it was to me that he owed it, I should"—he paused, with a significant look, and a low whistle.

"What no go, hey, Mr. Heath?" exclaimed Giles, in alarm.

"Don't ask me," said Heath, walking away.

"Here's a do!" muttered the poacher indignantly to himself; and he were a going to cheat a poor man, were he?" There is no one, by the way, whose virtuous wrath is so readily aroused, as a thorough-paced rascal, who fancies that some one is endeavouring to defraud him. "I'll soon put a stop to that," he continued. "Well, Mr. Tyrrell, will you be pleased to let me have the money? These here young gents 'ull be witness as it ha' been paid. So there won't be no need of a receipt."

"I—I am afraid," said Tyrrell, "I can't at this

minute. You see the sum is rather a large one"——

"Raypher too large for me to lose, sartinly," returned Giles, sulkily. "If I thought as you meant to skulk out o' paying"——

"There, you needn't say that," broke in Tyrrell, haughtily: "I do mean to pay you—to pay you every farthing."

"I dare say," said Giles, interrupting him in his turn. "I never knowed a man as didn't say the same; but I should like to know when?"

"When! why the very moment I can get the money," replied Tyrrell, more angrily than before; for the man's tone, now bordering on insolence, galled him beyond measure.

"When you can get it!" repeated Giles; "and may I make so bold as to ask when that 'ull be?"

Tyrrell paused a moment to reflect. "I will write to my father," he thought, "and ask him to help me. I am certain he will send me the money by return of post." He ran over in his mind the length of time which must elapse before he could receive an answer; and then replied to his questioner, that he would be prepared to discharge the amount of his debt on the following Tuesday.

"Toosday next?" said Mr. Giles, "and this here is Thursday. Well, I shan't be a coming your way a fore Thursday—this day week. That makes two days more

than you's named. Did I hear you young gents a saying as the Halphybut match were a going to be begun a Thursday?"

"Yes," said Gore, to whom Giles's question was more particularly addressed. "I believe it has been so settled."

"Very well. Then a Thursday I shall come up to t' Green, wi' my basket, and in course you'll be ready to hand over the money. I knows as you wouldn't like me to speak to t' masters"——

"Speak to whom you please," broke out Tyrrell, whose anger was now thoroughly awakened. "I consider this a debt of honour, and shall therefore pay it. But I shall heed nothing else. Come and ask for your money on Thursday, and if I don't pay you, take what steps you choose. After you *have* been paid, be pleased to remember I shall have no further dealings with you."

"And do *you* remember, sir," returned Giles, whose wrath was equally stirred up by Tyrrell's words and manner, "that if I sees you out on t' Green on Thursday, and you hasn't the money, I'll go straight to your master, and see whether a poor man is to be cheated this here ways. I don't mean no offence to you, Mr. Stapleton; nor to you, Mr. Gore; nor yet, I am sure, to you, Mr. Heath; and I makes bold to thank you, sir," pursued the speaker, who was rendered insensible by his anger to the "nods and becks,"

wherewith his hearer endeavoured to arrest his eloquence, "I make bold to thank you, sir, for what you has been so good as to tell me."

Tyrrell had not failed to notice the by-play between Giles and Heath; nor the embarrassment and confusion which the latter exhibited as he heard the old man's incautious remarks.

"I don't know what he has told you, Mr. Giles," he said, sarcastically; "but if he has informed you that there are some of Dr. Brooksbank's pupils, who have very little sense of honour, he has certainly told you no more than the truth. Come, Stapleton!"

The two boys left the cottage together, and hurried homewards as quickly as possible. Heath and Gore stopped to exchange a few more words with Giles, and then followed with the same expedition.

"I say," said Heath, as they entered the gate, "did you see Rawdon just a head of us?"

"Rawdon!" said Gore, "was he there? he didn't see us surely?"

"No, he didn't, for we were behind him. It is lucky we didn't come out two minutes sooner."

CHAPTER XIV.

TYRRELL'S LETTER.

"WELL, Robinson," said Stapleton, as they together with several other of the first-form boys, stood round the fire, in the interval between evening school and prayers,—"well Robinson, did you try Young's bowling to-day?"

"Yes," said Robinson, "and very strange bowling it is. In the first place it is left-handed, and in the next it twists from the off to the leg stump in a manner which is very likely to bother the batters. But his balls are not particularly well pitched, and are the reverse of straight. He would do very well to put on as a change of bowling, but hardly as our regular bowler."

"Well, but we must have him," said Billy Waters. "Tyrrell will, of course, bowl at one end, and we are lucky to have him. But there is no one else in all our eleven who can bowl at all. It is Hobson's choice, Young or nobody."

"Well, I suppose it is," assented Robinson, "but if Heath, or Hall, or Gore, once get a sight of his bowling, they will make awfully long scores off it. The

only chance will be their being out in the first over."

"And is the day for the match fixed?" inquired the other.

"Yes, Brickbats made no objection to our going out on the Green next week, so of course we shall begin on Thursday."

"Begin on Thursday! what the Alphabet match do you mean?" asked Gere, who came up at this moment, accompanied by Heath and Bishop.

"Yes, the leave has been given this afternoon, so I conclude the match will be played next Thursday; that has always been the custom, you know."

"To be sure," interposed Heath, "it is the invariable practice to begin it on the first Thursday after the leave. Nothing is ever allowed to interfere with it; no illness, or accidental absence of any of the players, I mean. Is not that so?"

"Yes, I suppose so," returned Robinson, "I don't remember a case of that kind occurring, and it isn't very likely; but I fancy it would be begun in any case, because if it was not got over early, other matches would be interfered with."

"Just so," said Heath. "Well then, it is quite understood, that the Alphabet match is to be commenced on Thursday, the 13th, whatever may happen?"

Billy Waters laughed. "You are in a great hurry

to beat us, Heath," he said. "However, we may as well be put out of our pain as soon as possible, as the dentist tells a fellow, when he wants to draw an eye tooth; so I see no objection."

"Nor I," said Robinson, "let it be so settled if you like. By the bye, does any one know where Tyrrell is? I ought to ask him to bowl, I suppose. He may take huff if I don't."

"Tyrrell?" said Billy Waters. "Yes, he is at his desk there," pointing as he spoke, to the further end of the school, where the boy in question was seated, half concealed by a pile of school books. "You had better not speak to him now. He has a letter to write before prayers, which he wants particularly to send by this night's post. It will be as much as he will do to get it done, I expect. It only wants twenty minutes or so to prayers, and the letters go to the post immediately after they are over, you know."

"Very well," said Robinson, carelessly turning away, "I can speak to him to-morrow just as well."

"Gore," said Heath, drawing his confidant into a dark corner of the schoolroom, "do you guess what that letter is, which Tyrrell is writing over there?"

"Yes," returned the boy addressed. "I make no doubt he is writing to his friends; his father probably, and asking him to send him the money to pay Giles. Don't you think so yourself?"

"I have no doubt of it. But," he lowered his

voice to a whisper, "it won't do to let that letter go. You see it is clear that Tyrrell had quite determined to play in the Alphabet match, and nothing we could have said would have prevented him. But this debt to old Giles is a lucky chance, which we must not let slip. Unless he can get the money, ten to one he wont venture to show on the Green; and if he does, Giles would be pretty sure to carry out what he threatened, and then Tyrrell would be sent in, and not allowed probably to come out for a month."

"No, that he wouldn't," exclaimed Gore, "even Brickbats would confine him to the playground for six weeks for it, and Rawbones, I'll be bound, for two months."

"Well then," resumed Heath, "it is plain that we mustn't let him get the needful before next Thursday. Now if the letter to his father goes, the chances are—I may say, the certainty is—that his father will send it. I know he is said to be poor, and a screw, and all that; but if he's anything like his precious son, he won't let Tyrrell remain in old Giles's debt, whatever he may do. He's a sight too proud for that, I guess."

"But how are we to prevent him from writing?" inquired Gore, with an air of perplexity.

"I will tell you," continued the other, lowering his voice still more. "You know the letters for the morning's post lie all night in the letter box, which stands on the hall table. We must get the letter out

some time in the course of the night. You need not look so frightened, Gore. I don't propose to steal the letter, but only to keep it back a post or two. Letters are constantly detained in the post, or miscarry. We can put it in again a day or two hence. It won't even prevent Tyrrell from getting the money, or Giles from being paid. They will only have to wait a little."

"Yes," said Gore, "but Tyrrell may get into a great row, if he hasn't got the money to pay Giles next Thursday, and—"

"And what sort of a row will you and I get into, if we haven't the money to pay Brackley, when the Alphabet match has been decided against us?" retorted Heath. "No, no, Gore. It won't do to be chicken-hearted. I tell you I have been making some inquiries since we came home, and I find things are even worse than I had suspected. Hunter says he bowled out one or two of the best bats in the Nottingham eleven, and got a long score off the bowling of their crack player. It is quite as likely as not that he may win the match for the N's himself; and they say this new chap, Young, can bowl better than any one supposed. We shall be beaten, unless we take care; and if we are, you and I will be in a most precious scrape, as you know well enough. I tell you again, we mustn't let that letter go."

"But how in the world are we to prevent it?" re-

turned Gore, irritably. "Don't you see he has nearly finished it already? He will give it to John Browning, and it will be in the post in another quarter of an hour."

"I will prevent that at all events," said Heath. "The letter shall not go to-night." So saying, he picked up a dictionary, which was lying—as it is the wont of dictionaries belonging to schoolboys to lie—on the floor of the schoolroom—denuded of one cover, and despoiled of a third at least of its original contents. He threw this with so good an aim as to upset the leaden inkstand, which was standing before Tyrrell—scattering the ink in all directions, and almost covering the sheet of paper, which he was on the point of folding up. The letter was completely spoilt, and Tyrrell's hands and coat sleeves, as well as his watch—which he had laid on the desk before him, in order to make sure of the time—were profusely bespattered by the sable shower. He started up with an angry exclamation, and glanced round to discover the author of the outrage; but the two conspirators had disappeared. What was to be done? He cast a hasty look at the watch, and saw that it still wanted ten minutes to prayer-time. It might still be just possible to re-write the letter. "Freddy," he said to the little boy who had been sitting on a low stool at his side, and had fortunately escaped uninjured, "wipe the watch, and clear up the mess. I shall be

back in a minute." He ran out, washed his hands and coat sleeves, and then sate down to copy the earnest appeal to his father, which had cost him so much trouble and sorrow to compose. Gray sate by, holding the watch in his hand, and every now and then telling him how the minutes progressed. The hour had struck, but the Doctor chanced to be late that evening, and Tyrrell's pen travelled rapidly over the paper. "It is finished, I declare," he exclaimed, getting up to seal his missive at the candle. Alas! at that very moment the door opened, and the head-master, prayer-book in hand, made his appearance. Hastily handing the seal to Gray, Tyrrell made for the door, hoping to find time to deposit his letter and return before all the boys should have answered to their names; but the stentorian tones of the doctor summoned him back, and the next minute the boys knelt down to prayers.

Tyrrell dropped his unlucky dispatch into the open mouth of the letter-box a quarter of an hour afterwards, and walked quietly upstairs to bed. The room he occupied was the smallest in the house, containing only three beds; one of which was tenanted, as the reader has heard, by Gray; and the other by a boy who was at the present time absent from Brunswick House. Tyrrell seated himself on the end of his bed, and began slowly to undress. It was very vexatious, but it could not be helped, he thought, and

it was no use fretting himself about it. After all it would only be the delay of one post. There would still be ample time to receive an answer from his father before the arrival of the dreaded Thursday; and there could be no doubt that his father would send the money—no doubt at all. Of course he would be grieved and angry; he could not be otherwise. But Tyrrell had deserved that, and must bear it. He had promised, like poor little Freddy, that he would never play wagers for money; but, unhappily, he had not, like little Freddy, kept his promise. He recalled the child's words that afternoon, which seemed like a warning to him; though he was now fully persuaded that Gray had had no idea of applying them to him. He had been ungracious, he felt, to the boy, and would make up for it hereafter. It was curious that Tyrrell, though he acknowledged inwardly the justice of the rebuke, which Gray's words had conveyed to him, would still have been deeply offended if any such rebuke had been designed. He would allow himself to be benefited accidentally, and could even be grateful for the benefit; but he could not endure the idea of its having been intentional! Well, human nature is a strange mystery, and pride is one of its strangest affections; but we have no leisure to descant upon it now.

The time slipped away as Tyrrell reflected on the embarrassment of his present position, and he was on

the point of getting into bed, when he discovered that his watch was missing. A moment's recollection assured him that he had intrusted it to Gray half an hour ago, while he was engaged in writing his letter. Doubtless he had it still in his pocket, and would bring it up with him presently. Well, he could ask him for it when he came. He stepped into bed, and in two minutes was sound asleep, and it was early morning before he again unclosed his eyes.

The story now returns to Heath and Gore, who had not gone upstairs with the other boys after prayers, but had remained awhile in the schoolroom. This was no uncommon practice with the elder pupils, when they had any exercise to finish, or entertaining book to read. No one, therefore, was surprised to see Heath sit down at his desk to write a letter, nor Gore engaged apparently in arranging his books. No sooner, however, had the last boy quitted the room, than Gore, closing his cupboard, came close to his companion's side, and addressed him in a low tone.

"Do you really think there is so much danger of our losing the Alphabet match if Tyrrell plays?"

"Yes," said Heath, "I have already told you so."

"And you think that he will be free to play, unless his letter is prevented from going?"

"I make no doubt of it."

"Then—then," stammered Gore, "you mean really to—to—"

"To take the letter out of the box, and conceal it somewhere, hey? That is what you meant, I suppose?"

"Well, yes, I suppose I did."

"To be sure you did," said Heath, coolly. "Well, Gore, I will answer your question more plainly than you asked it. I do *not* mean to take the letter out of the box, and conceal it somewhere."

"You don't! why I thought half an hour ago, you said just the contrary."

"You thought right. Half an hour ago I did mean it, but I don't now. Well, you want to know what has made me change my mind? I'll tell you. I have found out since then, that by an odd chance I have won the sweepstakes of two pounds, for which I put in this morning. It seems that Middleton drew Crabtree for me, and Crabtree, *we* know, though they don't, is the winner."

"Have you, really?" exclaimed Gore, "I congratulate you, I am sure. But still I don't quite see"——

"You don't quite see what that has to do with our chance of losing the Alphabet match, if Tyrrell plays? It hasn't anything to do with it; but it has a good deal to do with *me*. If we do lose that match, we shall have to pay two guineas a-piece to Brackley, and half an hour ago I didn't know where to get two half-crowns. I was ready to run the risk of detaining Tyrrell's letter, to get myself out of such a fix as that.

But now you see, come the worst to the worst, I shall be able to pay Brackley, and therefore I shall leave Tyrrell's letter alone."

"And who's to pay the two guineas which *I* should owe to Brackley, supposing we lose?" asked Gore, anxiously. "I told you before that I can only raise half a guinea."

"I don't know, I am sure," returned Heath, calmly. "Perhaps you may have a windfall like myself, and somebody give you two guineas, before the time comes."

"You know there is no chance of that," returned Gore, angrily.

"I don't *know* it," said Heath, "but no doubt the chances are against it. Well, Gore, you see you are in just the same hobble in which I was—in which we both were—before I heard of the sweepstakes."

"Then I suppose you mean that I must take the letter out of the box, and keep it back for a few days, hey?"

"I don't mean to *advise* you to do it, Gore. You must settle that for yourself."

"Well," said Gore, after a few minutes of anxious thought, "how did you mean to go to work? The box is locked, and John keeps the key; so it can't be opened, unless you have another key. And it is screwed to the table, so that one can't shake the letters out; and it is very deep, and besides, the slit is so

narrow, that no one could put their hand in to take anything out."

"You have been giving it a pretty close examination, anyhow," said Heath. "Well, I'll tell you what *I* should have done, if you will promise not to tell any one."

"I promise," said Gore, "only be quick, for it is getting near the half hour."

"Look here," said Heath, opening his desk, and taking out a key without any wards, except one at the bottom, "that will open the letter-box. I know it will, because I once used it myself to get out a letter which I had put in, and afterwards did not wish to send."

Gore took the key, though with manifest reluctance. "And when ought it to be done?" he said. "Now, at once?"

"What, when all the servants are about, and when Mother Brooksbank is on the point of going round to see the candles put out? Why, you must be crazy to think of it. No; wait till about three or four o'clock in the morning,—just daybreak, you know. Don't go down by candlelight; the candle might disturb someone. But as soon as you can see what you are doing, then is your time."

"I shan't be awake then," said the wretched Gore. "Am I to lie awake all night on purpose?"

"Really I can't tell you that: but if I should chance

to be awake at the time, I'll give you a shake. That's all I can promise."

"Thank you," said Gore, disconsolately. "Are you coming up to bed now?"

"Yes," replied Heath, rising and putting into his pocket the letter which he had been writing. "I shan't put this into the box," he said, with a smile, "until to-morrow morning, or we shall have you fishing it out instead of the other."

Gore made a lugubrious effort to smile in return, and began slowly mounting the staircase.

"Stupid muff!" muttered Heath to himself, as he followed him. "I must keep an eye upon him in the morning, or he won't do it after all. It will be two guineas out of my pocket if he doesn't; and besides, I mean to pay Master Tyrrell out for his insolence. Yes, yes—I'll take care he does it."

The early gray of an April morning was beginning to dapple the sky, when Gore crept cautiously out of bed. There had been no need for Heath to wake him. He had not closed his eyes for one moment throughout the entire night. And it was lucky, he thought, that he had not been dependent upon him, for Heath was to all appearance sound asleep. Gore huddled on his things as quickly as possible, and slunk out of the room. The hall and staircase were not so well lighted as the bedroom, and he could hardly see his way down stairs. Shivering from head to foot, partly

with cold, partly with dread of detection, he crept stealthily down, until he stood in front of the letter-box. Conscience whispered loudly in his ear, warning him to desist while it was yet possible, but he stifled its remonstrances, and taking the key which Heath had given him, thrust it into the lock. At this moment a sound, something resembling a sigh or a suppressed exclamation, from some one apparently close at hand, struck on his ear. He drew back in a paroxysm of alarm, and looked nervously round him in all directions; fearing to discover some lurking witness of his guilt, or to hear the voice of some concealed accuser. But all was silent, and the hall, so far as he could perceive, entirely empty. He took heart from the very extremity of his fears, and again applying the key to the lock, drew from the box the only letter which it appeared to contain. A hurried glance assured him that it was the one of which he was in search. With a sigh of relief he thrust it into his pocket, and was turning round to quit the spot, when he saw by the dim morning light, a figure swiftly but silently descending the stairs, and holding up its finger with a warning gesture. His heart leaped into his mouth, and he would have screamed aloud, if he had not perceived at that moment, that this spectral visitant was Heath.

"Hush!" whispered the latter, as he came closer to him, "follow me as quietly as you can."

The [illegible] Letter

with cold, partly with [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The intercepted Letter. P. 248.

Gore complied, too much amazed to answer. Heath passed through the door which led through the dining-hall to the schoolroom, and carefully shutting it after Gore, locked it, and took out the key. He then went slowly through the dining-room, looking carefully round him on every side. Having completed the survey of this room, he proceeded onwards to the door which opened on to the passage between the school and dining rooms; right and left of which lay the studies of the two senior ushers. This door again Heath locked behind him. He next proceeded to make a close examination of the studies, and finding these also empty, moved on to the schoolroom. Gore had by this time recovered himself so far, as to ask his companion for some explanation of this strange proceeding; but he received no other answer than a peremptory order to hold his tongue and follow him.

The schoolroom was to all appearance untenanted like the others; but Heath, who knew that the door at the further end was locked on the outside, was convinced that the object of which he was in quest was to be discovered here. Stationing Gore at the upper door, through which they had entered, he made a minute examination of the desks and cupboards; and at length, to Gore's astonishment, drew forth a small, thin figure, wrapped in a flannel dressing-gown, which had been crouching behind an open door. It was Freddy Gray.

Heath caught him by the throat, for he saw that the little boy was going to cry for help. "Hold your tongue," he said in a low, distinct voice, "or it will be the worse for you. No harm shall be done you if you are quiet, but if you attempt to make a row, I'll strangle you. There now," he resumed after a minute, observing that his threat had taken effect, "you have recovered your senses; now tell me what were you doing here at this time of night?"

"Tyrrell gave me his watch to take care of," said Gray, trembling from head to foot, "and I forgot to take it up with me, when I went to bed last night."

"What made you come down for it at this hour of the morning?" asked the other, incredulously.

"Tyrrell woke about half an hour ago, and asked me for it. He said he must have it at once now, or it would be too late to wind it up in another hour."

"Where is the watch?" asked the other.

"Here," said Freddy, putting his hand into the pocket of his dressing-gown, and drawing it out.

"Umph," muttered Heath, "that looks as though his story were true. And so you came down to fetch it, did you?" he said aloud. "Now tell me another thing, and if you deceive me, I shall be sure to find it out, and will thrash you till I can't stand over you. What made you look through the little window of the hall door, as you were coming back?"

"I—I thought I heard a noise in the hall," said Gray.

"You heard a noise in the hall, and you looked to see if there was any one there? Now tell me, what *did* you see? Tell me the truth, mind, or you will repent it."

"I saw—a boy—Gore here,"—faltered Freddy. "I saw him put a key or something into the letter-box, and take out Tyrrell's letter."

"Tyrrell's letter!" exclaimed Heath, forgetting his caution in his suspicion and alarm; "how could you have known it was Tyrrell's letter?"

"I saw him put one into the box last night, and there seemed to be only one letter."

"Oh, that was it, was it?" said Heath, somewhat relieved, "you did not see,—you didn't fancy you could read the direction on it?"

"No, of course not; it was too far off, and too dark, for that."

"Just so. Well, Freddy, you have told me the truth, and I am pleased with you. But you have made quite a mistake. It wasn't Tyrrell's letter that Gore took out. If Tyrrell put one in, no doubt it is safe there now. It was a letter which I had written, and there was a wager between Gore and me as to whether it would go by to-morrow's post, or not. Look here, you see this is it," and as he spoke he drew forth the letter which, it will be remembered, he had

himself written overnight, and which was addressed to F. Brackley, Esq., H.M.'s —th Regiment of Hussars, Barracks, Croydon. "This is the letter, you see, Freddy. And now you must promise to say nothing about this, because, though it is only a joke between Gore and me, it would get him into great trouble, if it were told to the masters. They wouldn't understand that it was only a joke. Will you promise to say nothing about it?"

"You are sure Tyrrell's letter is safe?" asked Gray, doubtfully.

"Quite safe, isn't it, Gore?" said Heath, with a wink at his associate.

"As safe as possible," returned the latter.

"Well then, I will promise," said Gray. "If it was only a joke between you and Gore, there would be no harm in that, I suppose, and I shouldn't like to get any one into trouble."

"That is a good-natured little chap," said Heath. "I will always be kind to you, if you keep your word."

"And if you don't, young'un," interposed Gore, "I'll give you such a licking, as you will remember to your dying day."

"I always keep my word," said Freddy, quietly; and Heath having unlocked the doors, they all three returned to their bedrooms.

CHAPTER XV.

A SUDDEN DEPARTURE.

THE second Thursday in every month was an occasion to which Mr. Mayhew looked forward with especial dislike. It was his duty on that day, to examine the junior classes in arithmetic, and report to the Doctor the progress which they had made during the past month. There was some satisfaction in noting the periodical advance of the first class, whose studies ascended into the altitudes of Euclid and equations; or even of the second and third, which had some acquaintance with vulgar fractions, practice, or the rule of three. But the junior classes—whose utmost achievement did not get beyond compound division, or possibly weights and measures, and who were wont to perpetrate, on the smallest provocation, the most appalling blunders—were an infliction, which was enough, as Mr. Mayhew pathetically declared to Mr. Winter, to make any man's hair turn prematurely grey. There were two or three incorrigible dunces, whose sums never came right except, as it seemed, by some strange accident; and who would inform him after a laborious course of explanation that "six tons of pig iron at £5 a ton would cost

£11," or that "eight drams apothecary's weight made one gallon wine measure." Mr. Mayhew, goodnatured as he ordinarily was, used to storm and rave before the two hours of school were ended, in a manner which would have greatly astonished any of his friends who might have chanced to come in at the close of the examination, and had not beheld him rise gradually from his usual temperature to the heights of summer, fever, or boiling heat.

On the present occasion he appeared more likely than was usually the case, to reach this latter point; having undergone considerable provocation before breakfast that morning, while hearing the first class their usual Euclid lesson. It had happened that a boy named Bishop had lately been promoted to the first class, and had had to overtake the others, who had got the start of him in Euclid, as well as he was able. He was rather dull, but painstaking and plodding, and Mr. Mayhew would not have been dissatisfied with his progress, had it not been for an unlucky notion which he had taken into his head—and when he once did get a notion there, it was almost hopeless to get it out again—that all the theorems in Euclid concluded with the inference, "which is absurd." Mr. Mayhew had at first endeavoured to argue Bishop out of this heresy; but that proving to be beyond his power, he had further proceeded to remonstrances, to threats, and as a last resource, to entreaties. But all was alike

without effect; say what he would, Bishop persisted in affirming that "A being equal to B, and B to C, therefore A also was equal to C, which was absurd." "Indeed it is *not* absurd," Mr. Mayhew would exclaim earnestly on these occasions; "you have done it quite right, Bishop. What is there absurd in it?" His pupil corrected himself for the moment, and omitted the objectionable formula; but on the next occasion he would repeat it with precisely the same confidence as before. Had Bishop been a lazy fellow, Mr. Mayhew might have attributed his blunders to idleness; and if he had been a clever fellow, to waggery. But as it was, no one could possibly doubt that he honestly believed that it *was* absurd; and though Mayhew had his suspicions that the idea had in the first instance been wickedly suggested to Bishop, by that incorrigible jester Stapleton, it was impossible to prove, or even allege the fact. That morning a new source of trouble had arisen, Bishop having made the discovery that "parallelograms which were double of the same triangle, were also double of one another," and when he wound up this remarkable deduction with his usual conclusion—which for once was strictly to the purpose—"which is absurd," Mr. Mayhew had thrown down the book with an exclamation more natural than dignified, and dismissed the class in despair.

This preliminary discipline did not tend to render

him more tolerant of the delinquencies of the junior classes. Never had Marsh and Fox, the two principal dunces of the fourth form, appeared so hopelessly dreary in their stupidity, as they seemed that morning. The former confounded long and square measure together, with a bewilderment which exceeded that of a land surveyor when cross-examined before a railway committee—while the latter, having already provoked Mr. Mayhew's wrath by asserting, that "12 pennyweights, he supposed, made a shilling weight," could find no other answer to his oft-repeated question, "what 24 grains amounted to," than a dubious conjecture that "they amounted to a small heap,"—for which last stroke of genius he was peremptorily ordered to stay in school all that afternoon. At last to the usher's infinite relief the *vivâ voce* part of the examination was concluded, and the boys took their slates to work sums. But here a marked difference began to show itself between the performances of the two boys who had hitherto divided the palm of dulness; for while Marsh's work bore a very accurate resemblance to his previous display, that of Fox was almost uniformly correct. Mr. Mayhew had noticed this with surprise on previous occasions; and suspecting that he copied the sums of his neighbours, had placed him at a considerable distance from those engaged on the same task, interposing several whose work was entirely different. But notwithstanding this pre-

caution, the same result followed; nor could Mr. Mayhew discover, though he watched him carefully, that he received any help from his neighbour.

At length, however, a circumstance occurred which convinced the usher that his suspicions were correct. A boy named Downes, one of the best arithmeticians in the class, had just brought up to him a long division sum in which the result was rightly given, but a wrong figure occurred, evidently by inadvertence, in the working of the sum. While he was pointing out the mistake, Fox brought up the same sum. It was precisely the same as that of Downes in all particulars —the quotient correct; the same wrong figure in the working. It was, of course, all but impossible that this could be a mere coincidence. "Fox," he exclaimed at once, "you copied this sum from Downes."

"No, sir, I didn't," was the reply; "I haven't been sitting anywhere near Downes."

"Let me see you do it again, then," said Mr. Mayhew, rubbing out all but the original sum. Stand there, and work it out. Fox endeavoured to comply, but after a few minutes he said, "My head has got confused, sir; I can't do it now."

"That does not sound very likely," said the usher. "Now, Fox, tell me the truth. You know a boy always finds that the wisest, as well as the right course. Did you do the sum you brought me yourself, or did some one do it for you?"

"I did it myself," replied Fox without hesitation.

"I am sorry to hear you say so. Who are the boys sitting between Downes and Fox? Let them come here, and Downes with them. Oh, there are three of you, I see,—Barlow, Woodhouse, and Gray. Who was sitting next to Fox?"

"I was, sir," said Gray.

"Did you do Fox's sum for him, or any part of it?"

"No, sir."

"Was Downes's slate passed down for Fox to copy it?"

"No, sir," replied Freddy, but this time with some hesitation, which Fox noticed, and requited with a threatening look, and a clench of his fist.

"This is strange. Downes, did you copy your sum, and pass it to Fox?"

"No, sir," replied Downes.

"Or did any of you three copy it?"

The boys repeated the denial.

"I hope you boys are telling me the truth," resumed Mr. Mayhew, who had now noticed Freddy Gray's embarrassment. "But it is next to impossible under the circumstances that Fox could himself have done the sum which he brought me. The matter must be cleared up, and I can have no evasion. I ask you four boys, did any of you in any way help Fox to do that sum, or connive at its being done for him?"

A reluctant negative was returned by three of the respondents, but Gray remained silent. Fox, who was

standing behind the usher's back, again shook his fist threateningly at him.

"Why don't you speak, Gray?"—The little boy turned as white as a sheet, but he still made no answer.

Mr. Mayhew, who most unwisely was resolved at all hazards to discover the truth, would have persisted, regardless of the probable consequences to little Gray; when, fortunately for the latter, a diversion was occasioned by the entrance of John Browning with a letter, which he placed in Mr. Mayhew's hand. "Just come from London by the coach, sir. The man said you were to have it immediately. Is there any answer?"

The usher opened the letter, and ran his eye rapidly over the contents. It was evident that they at once surprised and disturbed him. "Is the Doctor in his study?" he inquired of Browning.

"Yes, sir. He has just gone in there."

"Very well, take my compliments, and ask if I can see him immediately." Hastily dismissing the class, he whispered a few words to Mr. Winter, and then left the room.

"Well out of that," ejaculated Barlow, as the boys returned to their desks. "If he had gone on two minutes more, that young muff would have let the cat out."

"I'd have let the soul out of his body, if he had," growled Fox. "I say, you young sneak, do you hear? I owe you one for this, and I won't forget it. And if ever you do tell of me, it will be the worst day's job you ever did in your life."

A few minutes afterwards school broke up, and the boys thronged into the play-ground, some speculating on the chances of the cricket match to be played that afternoon; and others expatiating on the narrow escape which Fox and his coadjutors had had of detection. But the chief topic was Mayhew's letter, and its probable contents. All kinds of conjectures, possible and impossible, were freely vented; nor were the head boys, when they learned the facts, behind the junior in the interest they expressed. The sole exception to the rule was Tyrrell; who was too anxious respecting his own correspondence to think much about that belonging to another. He had reckoned, as the reader is aware, that it would be possible for him to get an answer to his letter by Tuesday's post. But not only had Tuesday passed without bringing the expected reply, but Wednesday also; and now Thursday's post had come in, and still there was no letter. He would have supposed that his father was absent from home, had it not been that he had received a letter from him dated the very same day on which he had despatched his own; and in that letter his father made no mention of any purpose of leaving home. What was he to think? He had expected reproaches, warnings, perhaps even threats; for he knew how deeply his father would be displeased. But the idea that he would send no reply at all, not even a refusal—that he would leave him to struggle with his difficulties unaided, uncounselled—this had never so much as

occurred to him. He was in consequence quite unprepared to meet such an emergency. Yet here it was, close at hand. That very afternoon the boys were to go out on the Green, and commence the Alphabet match. If he refused to accompany them, he would give very great, and he could not help admitting very just, offence to the boys belonging to his side; for it was now generally acknowledged that their hope of escaping defeat depended mainly on him. On the other hand, if he did venture out to take part in the match, he would be obliged to encounter old Giles, without having the means of silencing his impertinence —which was what he had vowed he would not do— and what was worse even than this, there would be risk of the old man carrying out the threat he had made on the Thursday previous, and detailing the whole affair to the masters. It was hard to say which was the more unpleasant horn of the dilemma. He thought for a moment of applying in this strait to Mr. Winter. The latter, who had discerned the fine qualities of Tyrrell's character as well as its blemishes, had several times invited him to his room, and endeavoured to gain some influence over him, as he had done with such beneficial effect in the instance of others. But Tyrrell's pride had revolted against this, and though not insensible to the usher's influence, he had never responded heartily to his advances. Now, however, he felt what a boon Mr. Winter's advice and assistance would be, and wished

that he had availed himself more cordially of his kindness. But he reasoned that it would be mean and paltry to seek the friendliness in his hour of need, which he had uniformly rejected in his prosperity.

The morning passed quickly away. It wanted a few minutes to dinner-time when Stapleton approached Tyrrell, who was seated moodily leaning his head on his hand. He had no other companion than Freddy Gray, who had stationed himself safe out of Fox's reach, on a stool at Tyrrell's feet. The younger boy looked thinner and paler than usual, which might, perhaps, be attributed to the agitation he had undergone; but the short, sharp cough which now and then came from his chest would have made an experienced physician look anxious. Boys, however, rarely notice these things.

"I just wanted to say a word to Tyrrell alone, Gray," said Stapleton, addressing the last-mentioned boy. "You can come back in five minutes if you like. There, that will do," he continued, as Freddy moved to a desk a few yards off. "Now, Tyrrell, can you listen to me? I have something—more than one thing—to tell you, which you ought to hear."

"I know what you mean," answered Tyrrell, wearily. "You want me to come out and play in this cricket match of yours."

"Well, partly, no doubt. But that was not the first thing about which I wished to speak to you. Tyrrell, that fellow Heath is a snob."

"You needn't have come here to tell me that," said Tyrrell, drily; "I know it tolerably well already."

"No doubt. But you don't know what he has been up to now. He has just been saying—you won't be savage, Tyrrell?"

"Not I," said the other. "What does it signify what he says?"

"He has been telling the fellows that you shirked off paying for the skittle-ground at Giles's last Thursday, and left it to him to settle for it, though it was agreed that the loser should pay the hire of the alley."

Tyrrell started indignantly to his feet. "You don't mean he has dared to say that? I never heard a word about the loser paying. I understood that the hire of the ground was to be shared between us."

"No doubt you did, Tyrrell. You need not defend yourself to me. And I told Heath so before them all, when I heard him say it, and a bit of my mind into the bargain. But you see, though you didn't know it, it always is the custom here for the loser to pay for the ground, so it is not so easy to prove that he has been telling lies about it."

"I will send him the money immediately. How much does he say he paid for me?"

"Only a shilling. Old Giles charges two shillings the first hour for his alley, and eighteenpence afterwards. Now you two were not quite an hour playing your match; and you paid Giles a shilling I know, for I saw you do it before we went out to shy. So he

could have paid only one shilling; and I believe he did that, on purpose that he might have the pleasure of spreading the story about you. He is a malicious beast, and I dislike him every day more and more. I think you had better do as you said, and if you haven't a shilling by you, let me lend you one."

"Thanks, Stapleton, but I have a shilling or two, and I will send it at once. It is better that I should not give it him myself, or I might be tempted to give him something else along with it. Here, Freddy, will you go on a message for me?"

The little boy ran up, pleased to be employed, and Tyrrell, stepping aside to his desk, enclosed a shilling in a sheet of note paper, on which he wrote as briefly as possible, "From Wm. Tyrrell, the amount of his debt. April 13th, 18—. Be good enough to acknowledge its receipt." Desiring Gray to give this to Heath as soon as he could find him, he returned to Stapleton, and inquired what further he wished to say.

"Well, Tyrrell, the next matter is this Alphabet match. Robinson seems to think you don't mean to play."

"I don't see how I can. You see, Stapleton," said Tyrrell, making an effort to overcome his reluctance to speak on the subject, for he could not but be sensible that Stapleton was really kindly disposed towards him, "you see I fully expected to have got that money long before this; but something—some accident, I suppose—has prevented its arrival. Now I don't know that I exactly vowed, but I certainly resolved, I

would not go near Giles again until I was prepared to pay him. He means to be on the Green this afternoon. You heard him say so, you know."

"Ah, I thought so," said Stapleton. "Well, Tyrrell, I wish I had the money to lend you with all my heart; but my exchequer is pretty nearly empty, and I am afraid the whole of our side couldn't make up the amount you require, among us just now. But perhaps, if you liked it, I could get—my father might be willing—— In any case," he resumed, after an embarrassed pause, "I could undertake to see that Giles doesn't interfere with you, if you will leave him to me. There is not the least fear that he'd tell the masters. That was all gammon. He durstn't."

"Thank you," said Tyrrell civilly, but with some hesitation still in his manner. "I certainly hope that by next Thursday——"

"And that ought to be quite soon enough for the old rascal, considering the heaps of money he has made out of the fellows here," cried Stapleton, "and you see, if you don't come out this afternoon, the match is as good as lost to us. Unluckily they have won the toss, and choose to go in first. I am pretty sure that they have done that in the expectation that you will not be there to bowl. It is dead contrary to Heath's ordinary tactics. And they insist again on playing the match, whether you are there or not, though Robinson told them how unfair it would be. But Heath made us promise a week ago to play it this

afternoon under any circumstances. I didn't understand what his object was at the time in making such a point of our beginning to-day; but I see it now."

"What makes him so uncommonly anxious to win this particular match?" asked Tyrrell.

"That I can't make out. He has no bet on it with any of the fellows that I have ascertained, or I should have guessed that to be his motive. Perhaps it is merely that he wants to annoy you by the defeat of your side. He certainly bears you no good will. But whatever the reason, there is some underhand work going on, and I hope you won't allow him to succeed."

"No, I won't," exclaimed Tyrrell, "that I won't, come what may. And here—I never thought of it till this moment—here is my watch. It is worth five or six guineas at least. I know my father gave more than that for it. If Giles is troublesome, I'll let him have it to keep as a security for the money I owe him, until I am able to pay it."

"Well, you can do that if the worst comes to the worst, but I wouldn't trust that old villain with my watch, if I could help it," observed Billy Waters. "He is as likely as not to pawn it himself, and then you might get it out of pawn the best way you could. I should keep that as a *dernier ressort*, as old La Roche says. Well, at any rate then, I may tell Robinson you will play?"

"Yes," said Tyrrell; and the dinner-bell sounding at this moment, they rose to join their companions.

About an hour and a half afterwards, a group of boys were assembled on the green, round the wicket which had just been pitched for the cricket match. It consisted chiefly of the principal players on the A side, who were awaiting the arrival of their adversaries with some impatience. A rumour had got abroad that Tyrrell had refused to play; and as many small wagers had been made among the boys on the issue of the match, this naturally excited much anxiety. None of the eleven were so eager to ascertain the correctness of the rumour as Heath and Gore; especially the latter, whose excitement was so evident, that Heath had to give him a hint to repress it.

"Don't fidget in that way, Gore," he said in an under-tone; "the fellows will suspect something. We can't have to wait long, you know."

"I suspect they are trying to persuade Tyrrell to come out. I know Robinson was at him this morning, but Tyrrell refused; and I saw Billy Waters trying it on again before dinner. Their not coming looks well, don't you think so?"

"I don't know," replied Heath; "it is hardly the time yet. Is old Giles here?"

"Not yet," said Gore; "at least he was not five minutes ago."

"That is a bore. If he were, and we could manage to let Tyrrell know that he was on the Green, I think that would be decisive."

"He is sure to come, isn't he?"

"Yes, I made him promise he would. And he is pretty sure to demand the money of Tyrrell, if he comes out and doesn't pay. If the worst comes to the worst, we must put Giles up to applying to him. He'll do it if we insist. He daren't offend me. I know one or two things——"

"Here they are," interrupted Gore eagerly, as a boy was seen coming through the gate from the school-house. "Pooh, it is only that little ass, Gray! What on earth can he want with us?"

As he spoke, Freddy Gray came up to them, and put a note into Heath's hand. "Tyrrell told me to give you that," he said. "I couldn't find you before."

"Tyrrell!" exclaimed a dozen eager voices, as the boys crowded round the captain. "Tyrrell, did you say? Is the note from him? Does he play? I prophesy he won't, and that they don't choose to play without him!" cried one. "What a shame!" shouted another; "he ought to be made to play." "Remember the A's win all bets if they don't play," observed Marsh. "That's very hard," said the former speaker. "Not at all. It is the rule, and rules must be observed," struck in Fox.

Heath slipped out of the hubbub, and opened the letter. It contained nothing but a shilling and half a dozen words, which made Heath's cheeks turn very red, as he perused them. Thrusting the shilling into his waistcoat pocket, he tossed the note contemptuously aside, and was about to answer somewhat petulantly

to the crowd of anxious inquirers, when he was saved the necessity of doing so by the appearance of the N's in full cricket costume, headed by Robinson and Stapleton, with Tyrrell walking between them.

Heath walked hastily away to the marquee, followed by Gore, who was pale with anxiety and alarm. Freddy Gray picked up the letter which Heath had flung away, and ran after him to restore it, but was repulsed with a cuff.

"Take the note back to your friend Tyrrell," exclaimed Heath. "If it is of any value to him, he's welcome to it, I am sure. Tell him I've got the money, and I don't want anything else from him. There, be off, you young whelp, or I'll give you a kick to help you on your way." Freddy shrank away, frightened by the angry voice and gesture, and seating himself with one or two other little boys on the roots of a tree at some little distance, waited to see the match begin.

"There is Fox going to play, I declare," exclaimed Downes, who was about Freddy's age. "Look, there he is, talking to Bishop. Why, I thought Mayhew had confined him to the playground for the afternoon?"

"So he had," said Barlow, "but Eighteenpence has gone away, or is just going, I don't know which, for two or three days, or perhaps longer."

"Is he really?" said Woodhouse. "What jolly luck for us! Why, we shall have no lessons, perhaps, till he comes back! Who told you, Barlow?"

"Sophia," said Barlow. "I went in just now to ask for a clean handkerchief, and she was giving orders for

putting up some clothes for him. His father, she said, was very ill, and had sent for him to come immediately. Old Mayhew seemed to be cut up no end about it. He hardly knew what he was at, Sophia said."

"Rather a shame of Fox, I think, to take such an advantage," said Woodhouse.

"He isn't the sort of fellow to mind that kind of thing," laughed Barlow. "There he is going in first."

"And there, I declare, is Eighteenpence just coming out of the house!" cried Woodhouse. "Now, if he happens to catch a sight of Fox, he'll be in for it."

"He has something else to do than to be looking after Fox, I reckon," observed Downes. "It is as much as he will do to catch the coach. There it is, just coming round the corner. Mayhew and Tom will have to run sharp for it. Ha! there they go. I say, what a lark to see old Eighteenpence running!"

"Missed, by Jove!" exclaimed Barlow; "the coachman doesn't see 'em. He will be left behind!"

"No, they're shouting after him, and he hears 'em now," said Woodhouse. "All right," he added, as they saw Mr. Mayhew mount the box, and disappear round the corner. "Well, I hope his father may recover, I am sure!"

"So do I," returned Barlow. "But I hope Eighteenpence will stop to nurse him, nevertheless. Who is this coming here? Old Giles with his basket, I declare. Come along, you fellows. I wonder whether he has any of that toffey he used to bring last summer?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST INNINGS.

THE two ushers strolled leisurely towards the Green, about an hour and a half after the commencement of the match. They had been paying a visit to the clergyman of the parish, who had a son at Dr. Brooksbank's, and with whom Mr. Winter was very intimate. Certain hints which this gentleman had considered it advisable to give them respecting what was going on at Brunswick House, had greatly surprised them.

"I don't want to make mischief, Winter," he said, "or to get my boy, or the boys generally, into trouble, which I suppose I must do if I spoke to Brooksbank, so you must keep this to yourself, remember. But it has come to my knowledge that your pupils have got into the habit of betting a good deal of money, more I fancy than they can pay—not only among themselves, but with persons in the neighbourhood."

"Are you certain?" said Mr. Winter gravely. "We have never had reason to suspect the existence of that evil in the school, and I scarcely think we can have been so entirely deceived."

"No, you are right in that. It has only been a recent introduction. That is the reason why I speak.

I'll tell you exactly what I know about it, and how I came to hear it.

"I went to dine with a friend the other day who lives near Croydon. It was a large party, and among the rest were three or four young Hussar officers. They were full of a steeple-chase which was to take place in a few days, and after the ladies left the room, they talked of nothing else. They didn't know that I had a son with you, or that I came from this neighbourhood, and to my great surprise I heard them mention several largish bets which they had made with Dr. Brooksbank's boys. One or two of them, I understood, were old pupils of the Doctor's."

The two ushers exchanged looks. "I thought no good would come of their visits to the boys," remarked Mr. Rawdon, "but I did not think matters were as bad as that."

"Well," said the Rector, "I have talked guardedly to my boy, and perhaps matters are not very bad after all. The regiment has, I am told, changed its quarters; and it is to be hoped that no officers in the next regiment stationed in the neighbourhood will be old Brunswickers, as your boys call themselves. The thing will die out, I expect, from what Charles has let fall, as soon as the exciting cause is removed, especially if you keep a careful eye upon it. It is for that reason I have told you about it, but I shall mention it to no one else."

Mr. Winter thanked him, and soon afterwards the

two masters took their leave. They had agreed that they would stay for a quarter of an hour or so upon the Green before setting out on their afternoon walk, and accordingly they turned their steps thither. It need scarcely be said that their conversation turned chiefly on the unexpected information which they had just received.

"I can't say that I am altogether as much surprised as you are, Winter," observed Mr. Rawdon. "I have suspected that there was something wrong in the way of gambling going on this half, though I did not think young Nicolls or Brackley had anything to do with it."

"Gambling!" said Mr. Winter; "of what kind, and who are the boys you suspect?"

"Well, I am only certain of one; but I suspect one or two others. You know old Giles, who keeps a sort of Tom and Jerry shop in Fidler's-lane?"

"Yes, to be sure," said Mr. Winter. "The Doctor altered the school bounds two years ago, for the express purpose of excluding his house, and publicly declared he would flog any boy whom he caught going there."

"Just so. Well, I am told that gambling goes on constantly at his alley. Card-sharpers and bad characters of all kinds constantly meet there of an evening."

"But do you mean to say that any of our fellows have been going there? I have never, I own, tried to prevent the boys from dealing with him when he brings his basket out on the Green. It would be no use attempting that, for do it they would. But it is a

very different matter for boys to break bounds in order to go to his house."

"Well, I can only tell you what I saw about a week ago—by the by it was this day week, exactly a week ago—I saw two of our boys come out of his cottage, and hurry home as fast as they could. I was at some little distance, and could not swear in a court of justice to either of them. But I am sure—morally sure—that I did recognise *one* of the two. I could see his figure plainly as he turned to pass through the school gate."

"Who was the boy you recognised?" asked Mr. Winter.

"Tyrrell," replied Mr. Rawdon. "Ah, you may look surprised, but I am convinced it was he, and he is a new-comer, which corresponds with what Dr. Stevens told us."

Mr. Winter did look, and moreover did feel, very much surprised. He was sensible that Tyrrell had faults of character; grave ones too, no doubt. But gambling, and frequenting a low and disreputable haunt such as Giles's skittle-alley, was what he would never have suspected him of. He was aware, also, that Rawdon had a very strong prejudice against the boy in question, and could not but suspect that this had not improbably affected the accuracy of his eyesight. But he could not well hint this; and the two ushers walked on in silence until they found themselves on the verge of the Green.

A crowd of boys had assembled under the great

elm on its eastern corner; some seated on its roots; some lying at full length on the grass; but all too much absorbed by the interest of the match to notice their approach. They stood still for a few minutes, watching the progress of the game, which did not at that moment present any particular interest. Presently voices were heard close at hand, as it seemed, the bole of the elm alone separating them from the speaker. Mr. Winter recognised Giles's voice, and unwilling to afford him even the countenance of his presence, was on the point of suggesting to his colleague that they should move elsewhere. But Rawdon, who had caught the general purport of what he was saying, laid his hand upon his colleague's arm, and obliged him to remain.

"He won't come, hey?" exclaimed Mr. Giles in a louder tone than he had previously been using. "Mr. Tyrrell won't come, won't he? Did you tell him who it was as wanted him?"

"Yes, I did, Giles," returned another voice, which Mr. Winter recognised as that of Fox. "I told him nearly half an hour ago. I said that you wanted him. You told me that would bring him in double quick time. But you're a humbug, Giles, I suspect; for it didn't make him move a yard!"

"Oh, it didn't, hey?" repeated the old man angrily. "Perhaps, then, you didn't tell him as he was a playing up at my shop only last Thursday? You didn't tell him as he owes me a guinea and a half for that

'ere business, which he ought to ha' paid *hon*ourable at the time, as a genelman does, but *he* didn't."

"Why, how should I tell him all that, when you didn't tell me?" rejoined Fox. "Why don't you go and tell him yourself, if you want him told?"

"And so I will, Mr. Fox, if he don't come pretty soon. I didn't trust him much at the time, with his talk about 'a debt of *hon*our,' and all that; but I'll just go to the masters now, and I'll tell 'em—"

What the precise communication may have been which Mr. Giles intended to make—or rather professed an intention of making—remains unrecorded; for at this moment Mr. Rawdon stepped forward, and ordered a junior boy to carry a message to Tyrrell, desiring him to come and speak with himself and Mr. Winter immediately. The boys started up, and stared in blank dismay at this apparition, and Giles himself was for the moment utterly dumbfoundered. Stapleton had been quite right in his judgment respecting him. He had had no real intention of appealing to the masters, and perhaps Heath might have found more difficulty in obliging him to do it than he suspected. He gazed at Mr. Rawdon with a kind of stupid horror, like that of a conjuror who has really succeeded in calling up the demon whom he was pretending to evoke.

In the meantime the match had been progressing, but with no very marked result. Fox and Jenkins had been sent in first, and though they could not succeed in making many runs, their wickets remained undis-

turbed. Tyrrell was evidently ill at ease. He was momentarily expecting a scene of that kind which his proud, sensitive nature particularly dreaded, and it was in vain that he tried to recall the skill which had so often laid low the wickets of players far superior to those now arrayed against him. As for little Young, he too was naturally nervous at playing for the first time with boys so much older than himself. Over after over passed, with no other result than an occasional wide ball or bye. It did not seem that the leaders of the A party need have been so much afraid of the adverse bowlers, after all.

"The score is creeping up," said Bishop to Gore, as they sat near the scorer's desk watching the game, "but it is awful slow work. Jenkins has got three runs, and Fox two; and there have been three byes, and five wide. That is just all, and the match must have been going on this hour, I am certain!"

"Well, at any rate it is so far all in our favour," returned Gore. "And what is more, I don't think any of us need be afraid of Tyrrell's bowling, notwithstanding the great things which Billy has been telling us about it."

"Ha! that was better!" exclaimed Fellowes, as Fox struck one of Young's straggling balls, and scored three from it; and "Bravo!" he added a few minutes afterwards, as the same player made two off Tyrrell's bowling. "He has got a sight of the ball, and will make an innings."

"All right, hey, Heath?" said Gore aside to the

captain, as he came up from the marquee. Tyrrell's bowling does not seem to be any great things, after all. If these two fellows can stand up to it, I think we can."

"He is not bowling well now, certainly," answered Heath, "but it is plain to me that he is nervous and uncomfortable. No doubt he sees old Giles, and expects every moment that he will come and demand his money."

"I wonder why he doesn't?" said Gore.

"Can't say. I thought he would have done it of his own head; but I suppose he was savage last Thursday, and didn't really mean what he said. At present it does not matter to us whether he does or does not do it."

The match "dragged its slow length along" for a few overs more, without any change in the aspect of affairs, when a sharp twister from Young at length disposed of Fox, whose place was immediately filled by Heath. This was in itself of but little consequence, except that it encouraged the little bowler, and gave him the confidence he had hitherto wanted. But it was a matter of much more importance that Tyrrell was now recovering by slow degrees his wonted composure. Old Giles had been on the ground more than an hour, and as yet had made no sign. It looked as if Stapleton's view of the matter was right. And Stapleton, too, had engaged to see the old man immediately after the innings, and make him promise to wait quietly for his money. From what he had already seen of Stapleton's ascendancy over

Giles, he felt no doubt that he would succeed. Tyrrell was further stimulated to exert himself by Heath's look of malicious satisfaction, as he applauded every success of his party. He was growing more and more exasperated at the other's rancour, scarcely suspecting that his own was almost as bitter. He roused himself to a determined effort. A fine straight ball, the first which he bowled to his own satisfaction that day, lowered Jenkins's wicket, and shortly afterwards another resembling it sent Fellowes, who had taken his place, back to the marquee without having made a run.

"Bravo, Tyrrell!" cried Stapleton. "That's the kind of thing. Six or seven balls more like that, will settle the whole of them. Hurrah for the N's!"

Heath stepped aside during the short interval which usually precedes the appearance of a fresh player, and spoke a few words with Fox who immediately left the marquee, and moved off in the direction of the great elm.

Hall now succeeded to Fellowes's vacancy. He was considered, next to Heath, the best bat in the school. Nevertheless he had not received half-a-dozen of Tyrrell's balls, when his bails flew into the air.

"Plague on it," muttered Heath, "how well this fellow is bowling! They will all be out before Fox returns. I say, Bishop," he said, taking the boy aside, "you had better go in next, and mind you play cautiously. Block Tyrrell's balls as much as possible. It is hardly possible to hit them, but you may score off Young. Take your time now, there's no hurry about going in."

The N's were, however, of a different opinion. "Now then, A's," shouted Robinson, "who is to go in next?"

"Bishop," said Heath, and the boy named stepped up to the wicket. It seemed as if Heath's policy would be successful. Bishop, a steady, though not brilliant player, contrived to stop the first few overs of Tyrrell's bowling successfully, while some runs were made off the other bowler. Presently Fox was seen coming up on the opposite side, apparently intending to speak to Tyrrell as soon as the over was concluded. But before he could do so, another casualty had occurred. Bishop, who had succeeded in blocking the first three balls of the over, endeavoured to interpose his bat in like manner to stop the fourth also, but it flew just over its edge, and coming full on the bail, sent it a dozen yards flying.

In the midst of the jubilant applause which followed, Fox advanced to the spot where the successful bowler was standing, in conversation with Robinson and Billy Waters, and informed him that he was wanted.

"He can't go now," exclaimed Robinson. "Whoever wants him must wait till the innings is over."

"Who sent you?" inquired Tyrrell, with a very evident change of tone and manner.

"Old Giles," replied the other, with a covert insolence, which, however, was unperceived by the person addressed. "He says he wants to see you particularly, and if you don't go to him you'll be sorry for it."

"Old Giles may go and be hanged," cried Robinson, amazed and indignant at the impertinence. "He must be mad to ask any of the fellows to go to him at all, and at such a time too! He must be mad or drunk to think of it."

"He *is* drunk, probably," said Stapleton; "that is, Fox," he continued, fixing his eye steadily on him, "that is, if he sent that message at all."

"Tell him to go home and get sober," said Robinson, impatiently. "Now, Tyrrell, time is up, let us begin again."

Tyrrell was not sorry to have his creditor's summons so peremptorily disposed of, and in compliance with the captain's order, again took up the cricket-ball. But he strove in vain to regain his self-possession. He could not help glancing round every moment to see whether Giles was proceeding to put his threat in execution. This so discomposed him, that the first ball he delivered was declared wide by the umpire; and the second, though pitched straighter, fell short of the right distance, rising with an easy long hop to Gore, who struck out at it, and scored the first fiver that had been made that day. This did not tend to restore Tyrrell's confidence; his bowling became more and more irregular, as his sense of vexation at the strange appearance which his demeanour must present aggravated the disquiet he already felt; and Heath and Gore, following up their success, rapidly ran up a formidable score.

Forty, fifty, sixty, sixty-five, seventy, seventy-five

runs! Matters were getting worse and worse. The leaders of the N party exchanged looks of mutual surprise and vexation, and the unlucky bowler was growing every moment more uncomfortable. It was a positive relief when another messenger arrived, requiring his immediate presence; not this time in the name of old Giles, but of that of Mr. Rawdon and Mr. Winter.

"You must excuse me for a minute or two, Robinson," he said; "Rawdon and Winter want me;" and throwing down the ball, he hastened to the spot where the masters were stationed. There was an expression of severity on the face of the senior usher, and of deep regret on that of his colleague, which accorded but too nearly with his own secret fears.

"You wish to know why we sent for you, Tyrrell," said the first-named gentleman, in the icy tone which he was wont to assume when seriously displeased. "Be so good as to step this way, and you shall know." There was a knot of youngsters gathered round a bench under the large elm. They gave way right and left as the usher advanced, and displayed the sight which Tyrrell had been but too surely anticipating,—old Giles and his basket.

"Don't go away, boys," said Mr. Rawdon; "I wish to say a word or two to this man before you all. Now, Mr. Giles, will you be good enough to repeat what I heard you saying to one of the young gentlemen a few minutes ago?"

"To one of the young genelmen, sir," returned

Giles, with all the humility he could put on. "Begging your parding, sir, I didn't know as I had gone for to speak otherwise than conformable to any of the genelmen, sir. But if so be as I did, sir, it wasn't what I meant for to go for to do,—leastwise for to say; and I hopes as you'll be pleased to 'xcuse it, sir. I wouldn't persume to speak disrespectful."

"I did not imply that you had said anything disrespectful," said Mr. Rawdon. "You had a perfect right to say what you did. I only want to hear it again."

"Who may the young gent have been as I spoke to?" inquired Giles.

"It does not signify so much to whom you said it," replied the usher, "but it was this young gentleman here *of* whom you spoke. I must request you to repeat in his hearing what you have said in his absence."

"What, Mr. Tyrrell, sir? Well, sir, I believe I did say a word or two to Mr. Fox about him, though to be sure I forget what. But it ain't of no kinder consekense. There ain't nuffin to trouble you about."

"I can't agree with you, Mr. Giles," returned his questioner drily. "At all events, I must beg you to let me hear it."

"Well, sir, in course I must speak, if you insists. Mr. Fox asked me, sir—I han't no kinder doubt as Mr. Tyrrell 'ull pay, sir, but I don't let the young gents run into debt; the Doctor don't like it, and I wouldn't go to displease the Doctor, sir. But Mr

Tyrrell's quite the genelman,—there ain't no doubt on that,—and—and that's just all about it."

"That seems to me to be nothing, Mr. Giles," remarked Mr. Rawdon; "at all events, nothing like what I heard you say, and which *I* must repeat, as you won't. I heard you tell one of the boys that this young gentleman owed you a guinea and a half, and that you could not get him to pay it, though he had promised to do so. I can't be sure as to the words, but that was the meaning."

"Well, Mr. Rawdon, I only meant to say it, just in private like, to a gent as I know wouldn't go for to repeat it. I didn't judge as you was so nigh, and once more I humbly asks your pardon."

"What you said was *not* in private, nor meant to be so," said the master, "and that, moreover, is nothing to the purpose. The question is, does this young gentleman owe you money, and does he refuse to pay it?"

"Well, sir," answered Giles, rather surlily, for he was beginning to grow tired of the other's cross-questioning, "you'd best ask the young gent hisself about that."

"Very true. Tyrrell, you hear what this man says: what answer do you make?"

"I do owe him the money," answered Tyrrell.

"And you have refused to pay it?"

"I could not pay at the time, but I promised to pay as soon as I could."

"When did you make that promise?"

"Last Thursday, sir."

The two masters exchanged looks.

"Giles said that you promised to be ready with the money to-day," resumed Mr. Rawdon in a sterner tone than before. "Is that the case?"

"I could not get the money," replied Tyrrell in a tone which might well be mistaken for sullenness, though it was really the expression of shame and contrition.

"Indeed! then in fact this man's story is true. I should not have believed it of you, Tyrrell. I have had reason to be dissatisfied with you in some matters, but this is worse than I ever suspected."

"What steps did you take to obtain the money, or how did you intend to obtain it, Tyrrell?" asked Mr. Winter, who had hitherto stood quietly by.

"I wrote to my father, sir," said Tyrrell, "and I fully expected to have received the money from him two or three days ago."

"When did you write, and what did you tell him?"

"Last Thursday evening, sir, and I told him everything."

"And you have had no answer? Are you sure the letter was sent to the post?"

"I put it into the box myself, sir."

Freddy Gray, who was standing by listening intently to what was passing, started as he heard this question, and seemed to be on the point of saying something; but after a moment's thought apparently, he checked himself.

"Is your father ill, do you think, or from home?" pursued Mr. Winter.

"No, sir; I had a letter only last Friday, dated from Kingsthorpe. He was well then, and did not speak of leaving home."

"Winter," said Mr. Rawdon aside, "don't you think this is a lame story? If I could believe that he had written to his father and made a full confession, I would not be hard on him. But is it likely that his father would take no notice at all of such a letter; or, if he did, must there not be some very disgraceful fact connected with the matter, to induce him to leave his son in such a predicament?"

"I don't know what to say," replied Mr. Winter. "I am quite at sea. The circumstances tell strongly against the boy; but, to my mind, his whole demeanour, and, if you will forgive me for differing from you, his whole conduct since he has been here, plead as strongly for him. I incline to give him time to write to his father again, and inform him that another week has been allowed him for paying the money. If it is not paid by that time, the matter will be brought publicly before Dr. Brooksbank. If his father pays no heed to that appeal, I shall certainly agree with you. At present I am not clear but that there is some mistake."

"Well, Winter, let it be so. It is against my judgment, I admit. But we can try it. Tyrrell," he added aloud, "Mr. Winter is kind enough to propose that another week should be allowed you for obtaining this money, and I have assented. You had

better write again to your father at once. If Giles is paid by this day week, and you promise never to repeat this offence, the matter will be overlooked. If not, it will be brought before the Doctor. Go indoors now, and remember you are strictly prohibited from leaving the playground until the debt is paid."

The two masters walked away arm in arm; and Tyrrell, somewhat relieved by Mr. Winter's kindness, but very sad and desponding nevertheless, turned slowly towards the school-gate.

Meanwhile the match itself had proceeded, though with a different result from what might have been expected. On Tyrrell's departure, as soon as Young had bowled his over from the further wicket, the players stood still for a few minutes, expecting the return of the missing bowler. But when they saw him join the two ushers at the further end of the green, and it became evident that a long interview was about to take place, a conference was held between the captains of the sides as to what was to be done.

"You had better put some one else to bowl, Robinson," said Gore. "I don't expect you will see Tyrrell back—not for some time at all events."

"We have no one who *can* bowl," replied Robinson. "I don't think any one of our side, except Tyrrell and Young, ever bowled an over in their lives. If Tyrrell doesn't come back we must stop the match for the rest of the afternoon."

"Oh, I daresay," exclaimed Heath; "but our side won't consent to that. The match must go on.

Tyrrell chose to go away, and you must stand the consequences of that."

"Well, but I tell you we have no one who is able to bowl," returned the other. "Will you tell us any fellow whom we can put on?"

"That is no business of ours," observed Gore. "If you like to give up the match, of course you may; but if you don't intend that, you must go on with it. That is the universal rule; at least, I never heard of an exception."

"Very well," said Stapleton, who had been standing quietly by, listening to the conversation. "We *will* go on with it. Give me the ball, Robinson; *I'll* take Tyrrell's place."

"You!" exclaimed Robinson, laughing. "Why, Billy, I never saw you bowl in my life. What are you up to now?"

"Jack," said Stapleton gravely, "do you know what the Guardsman said when he was asked if he could play the fiddle? No, you don't. Then I'll tell you. He said it was impossible for him to tell, because he had never tried. Now, I am in much the same case as the Guardsman. I don't *know* that I can't bowl. Who knows but what I may turn out a second Lillywhite; and how am I to find out unless I try?"

"Nonsense, Billy," said Robinson; "we had better give up the game altogether than do that. We shall only make ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of the people looking on."

"Well, I don't agree with you," replied Billy. "I

think we should look very small if we gave up the match merely because Tyrrell was away for a little while. We have not done so very badly but what we may win, if he comes back and bowls steadily. Come the worst to the worst, they will only make runs off my bowling, and we may always give up at any time."

"Well," said Robinson, shrugging his shoulders, "'if you like to try it you can,' as the keeper said when the man proposed to pull the lion's tail—that is all I have to say! Now then, umpire, call play. Stapleton is going to bowl."

There was a general titter at this announcement, as Billy Waters took up his position—which he did with much gravity—followed by a burst of laughter as he delivered his first ball. Unaccustomed to balance its weight, he pitched it considerably further than he had intended, and without striking the ground at all, it lighted full upon Gore's knee; who, starting back under the pain of the blow, knocked his own wicket over.

"Bravo, Billy!" shouted the N's, delighted alike at this feat and its result; and even the other party could not help joining in the applause. Gore alone did not seem to appreciate the point of the joke; but after bestowing a few compliments on Billy's awkwardness, limped slowly off in the direction of the house, intending to apply some liniment or plaster to the damaged leg.

Earle succeeded to the place vacated by Gore, and Stapleton with unimpaired gravity proceeded to bowl again. Careful to avoid his first mistake, he this time

pitched the ball only a few feet from his hand, and it went spinning along the turf, in the fashion known among boys as "a sneaker." Everybody knows the difficulty of hitting this kind of ball when it comes wholly unexpected. Earle struck at it; but it slipped under his bat, and chancing by good luck to run straight, knocked his stumps over.

A second volley of mingled amusement and triumph burst from the boys. "Go it, Billy!" shouted Robinson. "If the Guardsman had handled his fiddle as well as you do the ball, he would have been pronounced a perfect Orpheus. That's two of 'em in two balls. One or two more, and our chance of the game will be looking up."

Billy made no reply to any of the remarks of the bystanders; and Tommy Middleton having taken Earle's place, the game was resumed. The third specimen bore no resemblance to either of its predecessors, and being a nearer approach to a properly pitched ball, Tommy was enabled to score off it: but chancing to slip on the smooth turf as he was making the third run, the ball was thrown up sharply to Stapleton, who skilfully put his wicket down. There now remained only the fourth ball of the over, and the spectators looked on with amused curiosity to see what it would turn out to be like. To the surprise of every one, it proved to be one of the most perfectly pitched balls that could be delivered, lighting (by sheer good luck, it must be allowed) on precisely the right spot, and rising rather sharply to the level of

the bail. Heath, who had expected any variety of ball rather than this, attempted to lower his bat to block it; but it passed just over its shoulder, and striking the off bail, sent it flying.

It is impossible to describe the outbreak which followed this extraordinary result. It was hard to say whether the boys were more entertained at the audacious imposture of their favourite, which had been so marvellously successful, or at the unexpected prospect of winning the match which it gave them, after all reasonable hope of it had been abandoned. The two remaining players of the A side, Jones and Hunter, were very inferior to the other nine. The first-named soon fell a victim to Young's peculiar style of bowling, without having made any addition to the score; and the innings of the A's concluded, only two runs having been obtained since Tyrrell's departure. The total, which had seemed so formidable scarcely half-an-hour before, now bore a different appearance. They had obtained 78 runs; of which 26 had been made by Gore, and 22 by Heath, and this was an amount which it was quite possible, and even likely, that the N's would obtain.

"I mean to win this match," said Billy Waters, as he and Robinson sate together in the marquee, watching the play of the N's, whose innings was now going on; "you see if we don't now."

"Well, Billy, if you bowl in that style again," returned Robinson, laughing, "I don't think Marsden or Ward himself would have any chance with you."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PURSE.

WE left Tyrrell walking slowly homewards in a very unhappy frame of mind. His worst fears had been more than realised. Words had been addressed to him, the recollection of which made his cheeks burn like fire, but to which he had been unable to make any reply. He had been obliged to submit to them in shame and silence, and the prospect of yet more humiliating exposure seemed near at hand; nor did he see how it could be averted. If his father had refused to hearken to the imploring petition which he had already addressed to him, what reasonable hope could there be that he would pay any heed to a mere repetition of the same entreaty; for that, after all, was all he could send him? It was but too evident that he had resolved to let him suffer the penalty of his fault, however distressing or disgraceful it might be. And now he could only tell him that he *was* suffering it. Where was the good of undergoing all the pain and trouble again, which his first letter had cost him, only to meet with a second disappointment? As he paced wearily along, occupied with these unwelcome reflections, his foot struck against some object lying near the wall, in the darkest part of the covered passage which led from the play-ground to the back entrance of the

house. He stooped to examine it, and found that it was a leather purse of the large, heavy description commonly in use at that time. It must have belonged, of course, to some who had recently either entered or quitted Brunswick House—most probably to one of the boys; only that he never remembered having seen a purse like it in the hands of any of the elder ones, and it was hardly likely that any of the juniors would possess such an article. He looked carefully over it, to see whether there was any initial or name marked upon it; and failing to find these, opened it to look inside. It contained a guinea, a half-guinea, and some odd silver; but there was no name, or memorandum of any kind, by which the owner might be recognised. He was still engaged in his scrutiny, when a footstep was heard behind him; and turning round, he perceived Gore, who, leaning on Bishop's arm, was limping homewards, "*vulnere tardus Ulixei*," still halt from the blow inflicted by Billy Waters's ball. Gore had already caught sight of the purse and its contents.

"What is that?" he exclaimed hastily. "Is that purse yours? Has anybody given you the money? Are you going to pay Giles?"

"No," returned Tyrrell coldly. "It is not my own. I picked it up a moment ago. It was lying here, close to the wall. Do you know to whom it belongs?"

"Let me look at it," said Gore; and taking it from Tyrrell, both he and Bishop examined it inside and out very carefully.

"No," said the former at last. "I can't say I do

But most likely one of the fellows has dropped it on his way out; or if not, one of the school tradesmen. Very few persons besides the Brunswickers and the tradespeople use this passage."

"Well, I don't know," said Tyrrell; "I think in the course of the day a good many strangers of one sort or another come that way."

"The best way," said Gore, "will be for you to put up a notice in the schoolroom, saying that you have found a purse, and what was in it. You'll soon find the owner then, I'll be bound."

"I should soon find *an* owner I daresay," said Tyrrell; "but I am not at all sure that I should find the right one."

"Why, you don't mean to say that any of the fellows"—— began Bishop.

"No," said Tyrrell, interrupting him, "I don't. But there are a lot of persons coming constantly to the house, friends of the servants, and I don't know who else, who would be sure to hear of it; and the chances are that one of them would claim it."

"I see," said Gore. "Then you had better not put up any description of it, or its contents, but only say you have found a purse."

"I don't think I had better do even that," returned Tyrrell, partly because he never liked to be advised, but chiefly because the advice was offered by Gore; "not for some time, at all events. The fellows would be making all sorts of inquiries about it, and would want

to see it; and a description of it would soon get about through them. If you two will promise to say nothing about it, I shall lock it up for the present, and tell no one. If no one claims it in a week or ten days' time, or perhaps a fortnight, then we may speak."

"Well, perhaps you are right," said Gore; "we will say nothing, if you wish it."

As he spoke they entered the schoolroom; and Tyrrell, opening his desk, deposited the purse in an upper drawer. Bishop then returned to the Green, and Gore betook himself to the sick room to have his leg fomented and bandaged: while Tyrrell, drawing out his blotting-book, sate down to compose the letter which he had been ordered to write.

But it was one thing to attempt such a task, and another to execute it. An hour and a half went by, and he had written no more than the date and a few prefatory words. At length the quiet of the schoolroom began to be disturbed by stragglers returning from the Green; who were full of the exciting game which they had been witnessing, and which bade fair, it seemed, to be as close a one as had ever been played at Martin's Green. Tyrrell caught a few words now and then from the various knots of boys clustered round him, which informed him that the N's had succeeded, after his departure, in getting all their opponents out in a very short time by means of some extraordinary manœuvres of Billy Waters; and that they had since been in themselves, and had obtained a score not much short of

that of their adversaries. Tyrrell not having been present on the ground, and the A's persisting in requiring the match to proceed, another boy, it appeared, had been sent in to fill his place, and had, as might have been expected, been bowled out without making a run. But Stapleton and Robinson had played well, and some others tolerably, and the upshot had been, as the reader has already been informed, that a score amounting to within nine or ten of that of the A's had been run up. If Tyrrell should play in the second innings, it was now confidently anticipated that his side would come off victorious.

Tyrrell would at another time have been interested in these particulars; the more so because they proved plainly that Heath and Gore were determined to win the Alphabet match by any means, fair or foul, that might suggest themselves: and he could not help wondering for a moment, even in the midst of his troubles, as to what their reason could be. But at present he could think of nothing but the unlucky sheet of paper which still lay before him, not half the first page being as yet filled. He was indisposed for any companionship; and when, shortly after the return of the Brunswickers from the Green, little Gray came and stationed himself in his usual position, Tyrrell noticed him only by a cursory glance. The boy, however, was too deeply engrossed by the thoughts which had been disturbing him for the last hour and a half, to remark his elder companion's abstraction.

"Would you let me ask your opinion about some-

thing, if you please?" he asked timidly, looking up into Tyrrell's face as he spoke.

The elder boy roused himself a little. He had no wish to be unkind to his protégée, and replied graciously enough, that he would answer any question he might ask, if able to do so.

"Do you think it is very wrong not to keep a promise?" Tyrrell winced. What could this child mean? He remembered that a week ago he had asked him just such another question; which had seemed to him at the time as though he had meant it as a covert reproach to him. And now it really looked as though the boy, whom he remembered having seen among the crowd on the Green listening intently to the parley between the ushers and himself, intended to throw what he had heard in his teeth. "Do you think people are always bound to keep their promises?" repeated Freddy.

"I don't understand what you mean," answered Tyrrell in a constrained tone.

"Why, supposing I had promised something which I meant to do at the time, but afterwards I found out something, or something happened which I thought obliged me to break my promise, should I be very dishonourable?"

"Really I can't answer such questions," said Tyrrell sharply. "Why do you ask me?"

"I thought, perhaps," said Freddy nervously—"I thought—it was about that letter of yours"——

"What letter of mine?" rejoined Tyrrell, more sharply than before; for now there could be no doubt that this forward little upstart was presuming to discuss his private affairs.

"Why the letter," faltered Freddy, abashed, "about which you told Mr. Winter—to which you said you had had no answer. I have been thinking"——

"You have, have you?" interrupted Tyrrell, in a tone so stern and angry that the little culprit started as though his old enemy, the goad, had been driven into him. "And pray what business had you to be thinking about my affairs at all? There, don't look so frightened! I am not going to be angry. I daresay you meant no harm; but another time you had better leave other people's affairs alone, especially if they happen to be a good deal older than yourself. At all events, you had better leave *my* affairs alone, unless I ask you to interfere in them." And so saying, he applied himself once more to the composition of his letter; while poor Freddy, overwhelmed with confusion and distress, shrank away unobserved into a corner, whither he was in the habit of retreating when the pressure of persecution was more than ordinarily severe. There he sat down to ponder over the rebuff which he had received.

What could he have done to make Tyrrell so angry? He had wanted to tell him what had occurred on the night of his adventure with Heath and Gore; but his promise to the first-named boy, to say nothing respecting what he had seen, embarrassed him. He felt very great doubts as to the truth of the story

which Heath had then told him. It seemed more likely, considering what he had lately heard, that Gore had really abstracted Tyrrell's letter, and afterwards persuaded him to the contrary. That would account for what was evidently perplexing to Tyrrell; viz., his receiving no answer from his father. That too would explain—what he had thought very odd at the time—the extreme urgency of both boys to keep the affair secret. He doubted very much whether he ought not to tell what he knew, notwithstanding his assurance to the contrary. And if Tyrrell had told him that he thought people might, under some circumstances, be released from the obligation of a promise, he would have at once divulged everything to him. But Tyrrell, it was plain, did not want to hear anything on the subject, and he durst not again speak to him about it. The grateful little boy had also intended to offer to lend his patron the money which he required to pay old Giles; or to give it him, if he was only willing to accept it. It has already been observed that Gray had a more than usually well-filled purse; which was the cause of much wonder, and some envy, among his small compeers. The matter, however, was easily explained. Poor little Freddy, though he had neither father nor mother, was the heir of a considerable fortune; and his guardian had thought it the wisest course early to habituate him to the use of money. He therefore gave him an unusually large allowance, cautioning him, at the same time, not to waste it in tarts and trash, and assuring him that

he should require of him a very minute account of the manner in which it had been spent. With the generality of boys this mode of procedure would have had either no effect at all, or else in all likelihood have led to evasion and deceit. But Freddy was unlike the generality of boys. His weakness of constitution kept him aloof from the sports of his companions, and the cheesecakes and lollipops wherein they revelled had no attractions for him. He had not even the near relatives or little friends, in bestowing presents on whom a boy's cash is sometimes expended. Money was almost as useless to him as the gold pieces were to Robinson Crusoe in his desert island. But here was a use to which it might be put—a use which would satisfy even his guardian. He took out his purse, and counted its contents. It was more than enough to release Tyrrell from his difficulties. Should he go and boldly offer it to him? No, he could not muster the courage to do that, after what he had just said to him. Should he wrap it up in a piece of paper, and leave it in his desk, or somewhere where he would be sure to find it? No, he felt instinctively that Tyrrell would not understand that the money was meant for him; or if he did, would refuse to avail himself of a gift so bestowed.

Well then of course he must give it up. He dare not go alone to Giles's cottage, and pay the money himself. The house was out of bounds, to begin with, and he would never have ventured to go there, even f it had been otherwise; nor was there any one to

[illegible] of him a very [illegible] account [illegible] it had been spent. With the [illegible] the mode of procedure would have [illegible] at all, or else in all likelihood [illegible] and deceit. But Freddy was unlike the [illegible] boys. His weakness of constitution kept [illegible] from the sports of his companions, and the [illegible] and lollipops wherein they revelled had [illegible] him. He had not even the ne[illegible] [illegible] friends, in bestowing presents on [illegible] boy's [illegible] is sometimes expended. Money was almost as [illegible] as the gold pieces were to Robinson Crusoe in his desert island. But here was a use to which it might be put—a use which would satisfy even his guardian. He took out his [illegible] and counted its contents. It was more than [illegible] Tyrrell from his difficulties. Should [illegible] and [illegible] offer it to him? No, he could [illegible] courage to do that, after what he [illegible] Should he wrap it up in a piece [illegible] it in his desk, or somewhere wh[illegible] [illegible] it? No, he felt instinctively [illegible] understand that the money w[illegible] [illegible] if he did, would refuse to [illegible] [illegible] wed.

Wer[illegible] he must give it up. He [illegible] not go [illegible] cottage, and pay the [illegible] himself. [illegible] out of bounds, to begin w[illegible] and he would [illegible] have ventured to go there, [illegible] it had been [illegible]; not was there [illegible]

Gray put through the gate. P. 330.

whom he could confide such a scheme. No, he must give it up, that was certain. But he heartily wished it had been possible, nevertheless.

It may, perhaps, appear strange to the reader that Gray should have been so eager to serve his elder ally, notwithstanding what might well have seemed an ungracious and unmerited rejection of his kindness. But the truth was that Freddy had no idea that he had been hardly used at all. He fancied that the blame was entirely his own, for improperly intruding himself upon a boy so much older than himself; and the rebuff administered to him only made him the more anxious to atone for having offended one who had been so kind to him. It is hard to understand the feelings of a poor lonely little boy, doubly lonely because surrounded by so many who had scarcely a feeling in common with him—difficult to understand the depth of grateful devotion which he entertains for the only person who has shown him genuine kindness, slight and careless as that kindness may have been. Captives in a foreign country, whose spirits have been broken by the continued cruelty of their masters, or the outcasts whom the world has pitilessly trampled down, have sometimes evinced this same intensity of gratitude for some trifling mark of sympathy, of which men in general would take but little heed. But it may be doubted whether human society contains any *pariah* more utterly abandoned by his fellows than a weak, friendless boy in a school such as Brunswick House. Nor is there a situation in life when

the "cup of cold water" bestowed for the sake of Christ on one of the least of His brethren is more truly given unto Him, or with more blessed certainty of reward.

Little suspecting the distress and trouble which his hasty words had occasioned, Tyrrell still continued his unwelcome and abortive efforts to complete the letter he had taken in hand; but the task grew momentarily not only more unwelcome, but more hopeless. The bell rang for supper, and it was still unfinished; nay, to say the honest truth, not a sentence of it but was so repugnant to his feelings, that his fingers itched to strike it out again. He was returning to the school-room after supper, intending to resume his unwelcome task, and having made up his mind to finish his letter in some way or another, and send it off before prayers, when Mr. Winter, opening the door of his study, invited him to enter.

Tyrrell was taken by surprise, and complied without demur. In no case, indeed, would it have been possible to refuse the invitation. Perhaps the sense of this made his manner more constrained than it would otherwise have been; but no one who saw him could have doubted that he did not desire an interview with the usher, however sensible he might be of his kind intention towards him.

Mr. Winter, accustomed to read boys' faces, perceived this at a glance. "Tyrrell," he said, "you must not suppose that I wish to lecture or find fault with you. But there are two reasons why I am anxious to see you. I have no other feeling in the matter but a

sincere wish to serve you. Still, if you would rather that we should not speak about what has occurred this afternoon, I will not press it."

Mr. Winter's manner was so kind, that Tyrrell could answer nothing, but that he begged he would proceed.

"Well then, Tyrrell, in the first place a notion has been entertained, in connection with your debt to this man Giles—which I think is most probably a mistake, but which would damage your character if generally believed, and I wish to ask you plainly about it. Are you aware that gambling goes on to a considerable extent in that old man's house?"

"Gambling, sir?" repeated Tyrrell. "What is it you mean by gambling?"

"Playing games for money is gambling," replied Mr. Winter. "Now, from all I have seen and heard of you, Tyrrell, I cannot believe that you would degrade yourself so far, as to go to a disreputable haunt such as Giles's house has lately become, and gamble there."

Tyrrell hesitated and stammered. To be sure he had been at the man's house, and had played skittles, which was "a game," and had, moreover, played it for a small stake. According to Mr. Winter's definition, therefore, he certainly had gambled at Giles's house. He had also promised his father that he never would play for money, and had broken his promise. No doubt he was to blame. He had all along acknowledged that. Still, to be called "a *gambler*"—an idea associated in his mind with roguery and swindling—surely that was greatly overstating the matter.

Mr. Winter noticed his confusion, and his voice was, or Tyrrell fancied that it was, a note more severe when he spoke again.

"Perhaps it is only fair that I should tell you the grounds on which this suspicion has been founded. One of the masters, coming home from a walk one day last week—last Thursday I think—saw you come out of Giles's cottage, in company with another boy whom he did not recognize, and hurry home as fast as possible. Now, he may have been mistaken in your identity, particularly as he was, he says, a considerable distance from you. I tell you plainly that I thought he *had* made a mistake, until I heard Giles say, and you admit, that you were at his house, and had incurred this large debt, on the very day on which Mr. Rawdon declares to having seen you leaving it. I must therefore believe that you went there. Still you may have gone only to buy something of Giles, or to speak to him on some other subject. No doubt going there at all is a breach of the rules. But that would be a trifling matter compared with what you are suspected of, and under present circumstances no further mention would be made of it. Can you assure me that you did not go to the house in order to play for money?"

Tyrrell still hesitated. "I did go to Giles's house last Thursday," he said at last; "but I did not play for—for high stakes."

Mr. Winter looked displeased. "High stakes, Tyrrell? I did not expect to hear such an answer

from you. Not a gamester who has brought himself and all belonging to him to ruin, but began by playing for small sums, and justified himself to his own conscience by saying that he did not play for 'high stakes.' Besides, even that plea cannot be advanced in your case; for it is plain that you incurred a debt you were unable to pay. I am surprised and grieved indeed to think you could so defend yourself."

Tyrrell reddened with a mixed feeling of shame and anger. He saw that Mr. Winter supposed that the whole sum of a guinea and a half had been lost at play, and lost moreover to Giles; so that it appeared as if he had been gambling with *him*. He could, of course, refute the calumny, but only by avowing that he had been playing for money with his schoolfellows. Moreover the usher's rebuke had roused the besetting sin of his proud nature into angry and determined resistance. What right had Mr. Winter to entangle him in this manner, under pretext of friendliness, into revealing what he could never have discovered except through his frankness, and then found unjust charges upon it? And was he to vindicate himself against such an imputation as having gambled with a low scoundrel like Giles, and lost money to him which he could not pay? No, let Mr. Winter think what he chose, he would never stoop to that. He looked up angry and defiant, but made no attempt at replying to the usher's words.

Mr. Winter regarded him steadfastly for a few minutes. "Perhaps," he said at last, "after what has

now passed, there may be no use in my mentioning the other object for which I wished to see you. Still I *will* mention it. It was to offer to help you in this difficulty in which you have involved yourself. I would willingly lend you the money to pay Giles, if I was not afraid that I might be doing you more harm than good by such a step."

He again paused, hoping that Tyrrell would take advantage of the opening thus offered him. In spite of the circumstances of the case, which were undeniably against the boy, and the embarrassment of his manner, which had all the appearance of guilt, Mr. Winter doubted whether there was not some mistake after all. Seeing, therefore, that Tyrrell made no sign, he went on.

"I would willingly, I say, lend you this money to extricate yourself from a very painful position. But I can only do so on condition of your disclosing to me the entire history of this unhappy debt which you have incurred. I shall then be able to judge how far, and in what way, I can best help you. You have, I think you said, already written and told your father all about it?"

"Yes sir," replied Tyrrell coldly.

"You will think it strange perhaps that I should ask you after that to confide it to me. But I had my reasons. One of them is, that he was an early acquaintance of mine, and when he left you here, he requested me to keep an eye upon you. Well, Tyrrell, do you accept my help on the condition I have named?"

"Thank you, sir," replied the boy, in the same tone

as before, "I am obliged to you for your offer; but if my father does not choose to advance me the money, I will endeavour to pay my debt in some other way. May I go, sir, if you please? It is getting near prayer time."

"Yes, Tyrrell. I will detain you no longer; that is, no longer than to warn you earnestly against the proud and self-sufficient spirit which is weakening, and may destroy, within you the germ of much that might be great and useful. Now good night, and think over what the Bible says about the sin of pride, when you kneel down to your prayers to-night."

"I should like to help the boy out of this scrape notwithstanding," thought Mr. Winter, as he watched his retiring figure. "There are fine points about him, and I can't get rid of the notion that he is not really so much to blame as he seems. Well, we shall see what can be done—we shall see."

Tyrrell left the room without reply. A struggle was going on in his breast, which he could not endure that any eye should witness. He was startled and half convinced by Mr. Winter's words. He was almost on the point of yielding—of telling all—of being counselled, comforted, and forgiven. But the Strong Man held his citadel too firmly to be thus dislodged; nay, he contrived to turn even the usher's kindness into a fresh temptation. As Tyrrell sate down to the unfortunate letter, blurred all over with erasures and alterations, the thought occurred to him that his father must be indeed harsh towards him, when even

a stranger like Mr. Winter felt more compassion than he did for his distress. Why should he then humble himself a second time to obtain what common kindness would have granted to the first appeal? He took up the letter, and tore it to atoms, as he reflected thus. "After all," he thought, "I have my watch still; and if no help comes before Thursday, I can pawn that, and obtain the money I require. I am glad I thought of that again when I was talking to Mr. Winter just now. I would rather lose twenty watches than write that letter!"

When Tyrrell knelt down to his prayers that night he remembered Mr. Winter's injunction, and tried in vain to banish it from his thoughts. What *did* the Bible say? A text stood out very clearly in his recollection—"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble." He looked at little Freddy, who was sleeping peacefully at his side, and could not help thinking that they two were apt illustrations of the text. Poor little fellow! How meekly he had taken the sharp rebuke given him that evening; and how little did it seem to disturb him! But he himself, who deserved reproof far more, could not endure the least approach to it, and how unhappy he was in consequence! Was he then fighting against God? Was God resisting him? Was that the true explanation of his distress? Anyhow, he could not pray that evening. He rose from his knees with a weary sigh, and after tossing restlessly about his bed, at length sank into a troubled sleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SECOND INNINGS.

"A JOLLY time this," said Fox to his fast ally and brother in ignorance, Joe Marsh, as they lolled over their books on the Thursday morning after Mr. Mayhew's departure. "Here has old Eighteenpence been absent a week to-day, and no talk as yet of his coming back. School would be jolly enough if this sort of thing would only last."

"Yes," returned Marsh, "this is something like, this is. It is a sight pleasanter saying our lessons to little Simcox, who is as blind as a beetle, and as funky as an old woman into the bargain! Why I am almost sure he must have known that we had the book open at the 'Propria quæ' lesson this morning."

"Mayhew would have found it out double quick," said Fox, "even if he had been blindfolded. He'd have known you never could have got through four lines of the repetition straight on end, Joe, except by some dodge or other. Trust him for that."

"I don't see why he should have found me out sooner than you," returned Marsh, a little affronted. "Granting that I have been turned back every repetition morning this half at that beastly 'Propria quæ' lesson, you have been turned back every morning but two; and then I believe Mayhew wasn't listening."

"I daresay," observed Fox indifferently; "I am sure I don't care how often I am turned back at it, for the matter of that. What's the good of 'Propria quæ' to any one, Joe? If a fellow knows a lot of French or German, he can come out with it at a dinner-party, you know, or when he's talking to the ladies, and they think him no end of a swell; and even if he only knows a heap of Virgil, or Horace, or any of those chaps, he may bring it in when he's making a speech. There was a man got elected for our borough last summer, they said, all by spouting Horace. But a fellow couldn't spout 'Propria quæ' to any one; at least, I should think not, Joe, could he?"

"Well, I suppose not," returned Marsh dubiously; "but I am not certain that 'Propria quæ' is so very easy, after all. There's Tyrrell, whom they make such a fuss about. *He* doesn't know all 'Propria quæ,' that I can answer for."

"That must be gammon," said Fox contemptuously. "Tyrrell is a stuck-up, conceited prig, I grant you that; but hang it, he must know 'Propria quæ,' or he wouldn't be in the first class."

"I tell you he doesn't," replied Marsh doggedly. "I *know* he doesn't. It was only this half that I asked him one day, when I hadn't had time to learn the lesson before Mayhew came in, what was the English of 'centussis,' and I'll declare he said it was 'a sum of money,' instead of 'a hundred asses.' What has an ass to do with a sum of money? I know I caught it from Mayhew"—

"So you did," said Fox, laughing; "I recollect now

what Eighteenpence said about it. But very likely Tyrrell didn't understand what you asked him, or perhaps was in a hurry, and didn't think."

"Ah, but that isn't the only time," persisted Marsh. "I asked him, only a fortnight ago, just to try him, what 'lynx' was. And what do you think he answered? 'A lynx!' Why every one knows, even *I* know, that the English of lynx is a 'spotted beast.' A lynx, indeed! I *should* be ashamed of such ignorance as that! By the by, is he going to play in the Alphabet match this afternoon? I suppose that will be finished to-day?"

"Yes, I expect so. But as to whether Tyrrell means to play or not, nobody knows. You heard the row on the Green last Thursday. He was told to get the money to pay Giles to-day. He is so awfully stuck up, that no one likes to ask him whether he will be able to pay Giles this afternoon; but most fellows think he won't."

"What then; he won't be allowed to play?"

"No; and what's more, Rawbones will have him up to Brickbats, and there'll be a regular blow-up! I shan't be sorry, for my part. It'll take that pride of his down a peg or two; and that is just what he wanted."

"It won't prevent the supper this evening, will it?" inquired Marsh anxiously; for it has been beautifully said, that there is no human being who does not cling to some one object with affection; and that object, in Marsh's instance, was a supper.

"No, the supper won't be stopped," said Fox. "But I didn't know you had got a ticket for it. How did you manage that?"

"Why, you know it is only the first and second class fellows, who play in the match, that are properly allowed to be there. But if any of them don't choose to come, the captain may give his place to another fellow. That's the rule, I fancy."

"I know that," said Fox; "that's how I got my ticket. Tyrrell sent an answer to Heath as stiff as a poker, to say that he had no intention of being there; and so Heath gave me his ticket. That was a good week ago."

"Ah well it is just the same sort of thing with me. Stapleton and Robinson have had some blow-up with Heath too—something about his having insisted on the match going on, I believe; and they won't go to the supper either. Yesterday evening Gore asked me if I should like to have a ticket, and of course I said yes."

"I should think so," returned Fox. "What should a fellow miss a good supper for? And what's more," he added, lowering his voice, "the supper will be jollier than you expect. There is more money than they want for the cricket things this year; and they are going to spend what's over in a jolly bowl of punch after supper. Won't that be prime?"

"Punch!" exclaimed Marsh, licking his lips. "You don't mean that? Why how will they manage to get the rum and the brandy? There'd be an awful row if any fellow was caught bringing them in."

"Old Giles is to manage that," said Fox. "The fellows spoke to him about it last Thursday. He is to be ·t the end of the play-ground wall with the bottles—ey'll be ginger-beer bottles, to avoid suspicion if they

should be seen—just before the play-ground gate is locked. It will be dusk then, and we can take them straight up into the Long Room, and put them away till we want them."

"How will he get them over the wall?" asked Marsh.

"He'll put a ladder against the other side, and lower the bottles by a string. That's easy enough. We have got things in that way before. It is lucky those fellows—I mean Robinson and Stapleton—don't choose to come. I don't suppose they would have consented."

"No, nor Tyrrell either, for the matter of that," said Marsh. He would have enlarged still further on his favourite theme of the supper, but at this moment a sharp reprimand from Mr. Rawdon, who had noticed the inattention of the two boys, reduced them to silence. Not long afterwards the hour struck, and the school-room was speedily emptied.

Fox was correct in saying that no one knew what Tyrrell intended to do as regarded the Alphabet match. He had taken no one, not even Stapleton, into his confidence; and the occurrences of the first day of the play had shown so evidently that the issue of the game would turn upon the part he might take, that his movements were watched with extraordinary interest. As the hour drew near when the play-ground gate would be opened, every eye, covertly or openly, was fixed on him. None of the Brunswickers were more anxious in their scrutiny than Heath and Gore; who, though they affected to be occupied with other things, kept a keen look-out on their dreaded antagonist.

"I don't like his looks," said Heath apart to Gore. "It may be only that he is trying to carry it off with a high hand; but I don't think he's up to doing that so well, either."

"Never mind his looks," returned Gore. "He hasn't got the money. That I'm sure of. I've just been talking to John again, and he says he's positive Tyrrell hasn't had a letter by post all the week, and that no one has been to see him; so he can't have got it."

"'Can't' is a strong word," said Heath. "I don't see how he can have got it, I must own. But there's something puzzling in his manner of going on. I shall be glad when the N's begin the match without him."

"If he hasn't got the money to pay Giles, he can't play, you know. He was positively forbidden to leave the play-ground unless he had it."

"'Can't,' again, is a strong word," repeated Heath. "He may choose to play, though he was forbidden."

"He would get into a tremendous row if he did," urged Gore; "very likely Rawbones would insist on his being expelled."

"Very likely; but Tyrrell is resolved, I can see, to play this match; and it is possible he may choose to be expelled, rather than be prevented. He is so preciously obstinate that I shouldn't be surprised."

"But Rawdon and Winter will be there. They are both coming, I fancy; certainly one of them. Tyrrell surely wouldn't venture."

"Well, but Giles mayn't be on the Green, and if the masters saw Tyrrell out there, they would most

likely take it for granted that the money was paid. If they didn't interfere till the match was over, it would be no good."

"Can't anything be done?" exclaimed Gore, in great trepidation. "Can't you go to Giles, and make him come up before the match begins, and demand his money? If Rawbones saw that, he'd be sure to ask."

"*I* can't," replied Heath quietly. "My interest in the matter is not enough to induce me to take such a step. But *you* may, and to tell you the truth, if I were in your place I should; for I have just heard from Brackley that he means to come over once more, either this evening or to-morrow, to have a final settlement with us, and perhaps Nicolls too."

"You don't mean that?" exclaimed Gore, turning as white as a sheet.

"I do, though," said Heath. "Look, here is the letter. It came this morning. However, here comes John to open the gate. A very few minutes will settle this matter now."

The boys pressed through the open door as eagerly as if they had been birds released from a cage, and the Green was soon thronged with a crowd of eager spectators. The players followed more slowly in knots of two and three. Presently a loud shout was heard, and Tyrrell in his cricket dress was seen advancing from the house.

"I told you so," exclaimed Heath. "I knew he was determined to play, if he were to be hanged for doing it."

"But gracious goodness, what is to be done?" cried Gore, despairingly. "We shall lose the match if he

bowls; I know we shall! All the fellows think so. And what will become of me when Brackley comes? Who in the world will lend me the money?"

"Well," replied Heath, "in the first place, and above all, don't let us lose our pluck. Tyrrell may bowl badly; Rawbones may ask him whether he has paid Giles; and Giles may demand the money himself. There are those three chances in our favour. But if we lose our pluck, that's just the same thing as giving the match up."

"Can't you delay beginning the game until Rawbones comes out, or till Giles arrives?"

"I'll do what I can; but Giles may not be here for an hour to come. He often doesn't come till quite late."

"I'll slip away, and run down to his house at once."

"Very well," said Heath, who had now carried his point; "I have no doubt I can put off beginning for ten minutes or so. You had better be off at once."

Gore slipped quietly through the throng of boys, and the outer ring of spectators, until he reached the cover of the trees and shrubs which skirted one side of the green. As soon as he was hidden from sight, he began running with all his speed to Giles's house. Meanwhile Heath, taking aside Jenkins, one of the third-class boys, desired him to go into the house and tell Mr. Rawdon and Mr. Winter, that the eleven were ready to begin their innings, but would the masters be so kind as to come out, as they did not wish to go on with the game until they arrived?

Having seen the boy depart on his errand, he withdrew quietly into the marquee.

"Now then," shouted Robinson, "the N's take their places to field. Are you all ready? Tyrrell, you take the first over, if you please. Who go in first on your side, Bishop?"

"Fox and Jenkins," replied Bishop.

"Now then, Fox and Jenkins! Where is Jenkins?" continued Robinson.

"I saw him running into the house only a minute ago," said one of the smaller boys.

"Running into the house—what for?" exclaimed Robinson impatiently. "We can't afford to lose time, or we shan't finish the match. You must put some one else in first, Bishop."

"I'll ask the captain," said Bishop, walking away.

After a few minutes' search, the captain was discovered putting on his cricket shoes behind a heap of jackets in the marquee, and came out to confer with Robinson.

"Jenkins will be back in a minute, I have no doubt," he said, when the cause of the delay was explained to him. "If he doesn't, we'll put some other fellow in. But we always prefer putting Jenkins in first if it can be managed. I tell you what though, I'll just go and finish putting on my cricket things, and if he is not here when I am ready, I will go in myself."

The captain's cricket shoes appeared to be unusually tight that day, for it was a good ten minutes more before they were adjusted to his satisfaction. He then emerged from the marquee, and was about to take

his station at the wicket, when a cry was raised, "Here's Jenkins coming back, and Winter with him."

Heath glanced rapidly at Tyrrell's face, but the latter preserved the same exterior calmness which he had evinced throughout. Heath's mind misgave him more and more. There was, however, no use in showing his disquiet.

"Oh, here you are, Jenkins!" he said aloud. "You had better take your bat, and go in. I was just going to take your place."

Five minutes more elapsed before Jenkins was ready. The N's, all excepting Tyrrell, chafed at the delay. The boy made his appearance however at last, and the innings commenced.

It was soon seen that Heath's forebodings were well-founded. Fox, with whom the play commenced, had scarcely received a single over of Tyrrell's balls, when his wicket was sent flying. Bishop, Fellowes, Hall succeeded, but only to meet with a like fate. A few runs were scored off Young's bowling, and an occasional bye or wide ball registered. But Tyrrell himself hardly gave a single chance. Old Crawley, the veteran cricketer of the Martin's Green eleven, who stood admiringly by, pronounced him to be the best hand whom he had ever seen deliver a ball on that Green; and the hopes of the A eleven sunk lower and lower with each successive over. Heath, who had delayed going in at his proper time in order to hear Gore's report of his manœuvre, lost all patience as the time slipped by. Even if he could

prevent Tyrrell from bowling another ball now, the chances would be greatly against his party. At length, when on the fall of Hall's wicket, he was preparing in despair to succeed to the vacant place, he perceived in the distance Gore slowly returning. Desiring Earle to go in in his stead, he stepped aside to the marquee, and beckoned to Gore to join him.

"Well, have you seen Giles?" he exclaimed impatiently. "Is he coming?"

"It does not much signify whether he comes or not," said Gore.

"Why not? Does the old rascal refuse to demand his money? If he does, I'll——"

"He can't demand it," interrupted Gore peevishly. "Tyrrell has paid him!"

A shout at this moment warned him that another wicket had fallen to the hero of the day; and with an angry malediction, Heath hurried off to take his innings. Both he and Gore, who shortly afterwards succeeded to Earle's vacancy, put out their utmost skill, and made the most desperate efforts to reverse the fortune of the day. But it was all in vain. The whole of the A's were disposed of with no larger score than thirty-three runs, leaving their antagonists but forty-two to obtain; and the N's commencing their innings with Tyrrell and Stapleton, ran up this amount with the loss of only two wickets, Tyrrell himself retaining his bat to the end.

It was, indeed, a signal triumph for him; and the discomfiture of Heath was complete. But it was observed

that the Brunswickers, though greatly interested by the match, and ready enough to applaud the successful strokes of other players, bestowed none of their enthusiasm on Tyrrell. A splendid bail ball, or a slashing hit for six; which, if made by any other of the eleven, would have elicited a burst of cheering, was received in admiring, but somewhat chilling silence. Even when the day was decided in favour of the N's, and the shouts of the victors rent the sky, his name was not to be heard among those of the heroes selected for honour. If he noticed this, however, he did not appear to mind it. He had no sooner heard the announcement from the scorer that the victory had been obtained, than he elevated his bat on his shoulder, and without exchanging a word with any one, walked quietly off the ground.

The reader must not attribute this to ungraciousness, or even to pride—at least, not directly. The truth was, he felt unhappy and dissatisfied with himself, and his very success was in some sort a reproach to him. He had resolved upon two things immediately after his interview with Mr. Winter—that he *would* play, and that his side *should* win. The malicious attempt made by Heath to mortify and humiliate him should, he was determined, recoil on its author. He took his measures accordingly. Obtaining from Dr. Brooksbank, on the following day, leave to go out for half an hour into the village—a privilege rarely refused to a first-class boy—he had paid a visit to the only watchmaker and

jeweller whom Martin's Green could boast, and this worthy had readily undertaken to purchase his watch of him at something less than half its value. Tyrrell's programme had been to wait until the Thursday morning, and if no answer should then have arrived, to dispose of his watch, and so obtain the necessary funds. But his plans had been interrupted in a very unlooked-for manner. He had scarcely returned from his expedition, when a note was put into his hand, which had just been left at the back door for him. The handwriting was a strange scarcely legible scrawl, and quite unknown to him. He opened it, not without some secret misgiving; but the contents, though unexpected, were by no means of a nature to annoy him.

They were as follows:—

"Martin's Grene neer Lunnon.

"Muster Tirrull, up at Brungswik House, to J. Giles Dr.

"To brakeing two squairs of glas, and six of my wife's jampots and the treekel pot, and spiling of my best cote as agreed upon, one ginney and a harf.

"receaved the sam this day, fryeday, April — 18—

"J. Giles."

Tyrrell read this original document two or three times through, and then carefully scrutinized every corner of the paper, in the hope of discovering some clue to the person by whom the money had been paid. His first thought naturally was that his father, though

he did not choose to hold any communication with him on the subject, had taken this mode of removing the scandal, which must attach to the debt if it should remain unpaid. If this supposition was correct, it was probable that his father had kept the money back till just the day when non-payment would lead to public notice—intending it to reach Giles on the Thursday morning, instead of the afternoon of the same day. But then on the other hand, Tyrrell did not remember having mentioned the name of the person to whom he had incurred his debt, much less his address, and how then could his father have written to him? Could it be Stapleton? He had certainly said something about asking his father to advance the money, and if Tyrrell had given him any encouragement, would doubtless have offered to do so. Robinson and he had been so anxious to win the Alphabet match, that it was far from unlikely that they had contrived between them, by hook or by crook, to raise the money. But no, on reflection, that could not be it either. Stapleton could hardly have had time to write home, and get an answer; and who else would give him the money? Then again, Tyrrell remembered what Mr. Winter had said to him. True, he had made it a *sine quâ non* that he should tell him everything connected with the debt, and he had refused to comply. But Mr. Winter might have changed his mind on that point afterwards. It was not unlike what he had heard of the usher from some of the boys when speaking of him. Improbable as this conjecture

might appear, it was the least unlikely of any that occurred to him. Well, at all events it was beyond his power to discover the truth. He must wait till some clue presented itself. Meanwhile, the debt was paid. That was an incontestable fact; and he was free to play in the match on the ensuing Thursday, that was another. Any other boy in the school would have made the fact known to his companions without loss of time; but Tyrrell was naturally reserved, and, moreover, felt a special reluctance to talk on the subject. He remained therefore entirely silent respecting his release from debt. It must be allowed that it afforded him some malicious satisfaction to notice the anxiety with which Heath and Gore looked every morning, after the arrival of the post, to see whether there was any letter for him, and their evident relief when the servant passed him by.

And now he had played, and had won his match. He had obtained as complete a triumph as his imagination could have pictured, if he had sate down beforehand to devise one. Yet he was not satisfied; nay, he was less satisfied, if the truth were told, than he had been a week ago, when full of shame and alarm he had left Mr. Winter's study. Many a conqueror has sate down, after the battle, to mourn over his victory; but none have such good cause for doing so, as they who have made allies of their own evil passions, and by their help have achieved a success tenfold more disastrous than defeat itself.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUPPER.

"ARE not Robinson and Billy Waters coming to the supper?" inquired Bishop of Heath, as the party began to assemble in the Long Room that evening. "Marsh here, says he has got Billy's place. That isn't true, is it?"

"Yes," replied Heath shortly, "they have both sent to say they don't mean to come."

"What a bore!" said Bishop. "Why, the supper won't be half the fun without Billy Waters. That lubber Marsh is about as good a substitute for him as swipes would be for champagne. Why won't he come?"

"Sulky, I believe, about the match—about our having insisted on its being continued last Thursday, when Tyrrell went away."

"Well, perhaps it was rather sharp practice," said Bishop, who was a straightforward fellow. "But as they won, I should think they might have overlooked that now."

"Perhaps they might," said Heath coldly, "but there were two parties to that bargain. If they had changed their minds about it, any way I hadn't. I had given away their places to Marsh and Jenkins, so there would have been no room for them."

"And I suppose Tyrrell isn't coming either, is he?" asked Bishop.

"Tyrrell! No, I should think not, indeed!" returned Heath, with a short laugh. "He'd be about as welcome, I expect, as Rawbones or old Brickbats himself; and I guess he knows it. He refused more than a week ago."

"Ah, just at the time of that row on the Green—the same day on which he found the purse, I suppose, hey? I remember he looked tremendously sulky when we met him that afternoon."

"Purse—what purse?" asked Heath, pricking up his ears.

"Oh, don't you remember the purse with the guinea and a half in it? Ah, by the by it was Gore, not you, who was hit by the cricket ball. I have made a mistake between you and him. I oughtn't to have said anything about the purse. I promised Tyrrell I wouldn't."

"Well, but now you *have* mentioned it, you had better explain yourself clearly," said Heath, whose curiosity was much excited.

"No," said Bishop bluntly, "I promised I wouldn't say anything on the subject, and I shouldn't have done so, if I hadn't thought you knew about it already. But I don't see that because I said a word or two under a mistake, I am bound to say more."

"As you please," said Heath indifferently. "It is no business of mine; only I don't think it is quite right that purses should be found, especially purses

containing such a sum as a guinea and a half, and all mention of the fact suppressed, I must say."

"Well, I don't say that I do either," said Bishop. "But, as I said before, Gore and I promised Tyrrell that we would say nothing about it, and when I make a promise, I keep to it. However, Heath, I think the supper seems to be ready, and that is a pleasanter subject to discuss by a good deal. Shall we take our places?"

Heath was about to comply, when Fox pulled him by the sleeve. "I say, Heath," he whispered, "do you know that the things for the punch have never been brought in, after all?"

"You don't mean that?" exclaimed Heath in a tone of great vexation. "Why that scoundrel Giles promised that they should be brought to the end of the play-ground an hour ago."

"Well, so they may have been," returned Fox, "for anything I know to the contrary. But it appears that the play-ground gate was locked half an hour earlier than usual this evening."

"What was that done for?" inquired Heath anxiously. "No one suspects anything, I hope?"

"No, I believe not. But it came on to rain heavily just after we came in from the Green, and several of the fellows got pretty nearly wet through, and went in to ask for dry things. Mother Brooksbank got savage, and sent out to John Browning to go and lock the gate immediately. When I went to fetch the bottles at the time agreed on with Giles, I found it fastened."

"What a nuisance!" said Heath. "Can't we get at them somehow or other? I don't suppose it's raining now, and if it is, it wouldn't hurt us. All the fun of our supper will be spoilt. Can't we get over the gate, or through it?"

"It's raining cats and dogs," said Fox, "for that matter; but I shouldn't care twopence about the rain. I meant to have put on my cloak in any case, to hide the bottles in. But it is quite impossible to climb over the gate since the new spikes have been put on, and none but the smallest fellows can creep through the bars. I don't think there are above two or three in the school who could do it."

"Could any one creep through, do you think?" asked Heath.

"Yes, I know young Dawes can. I saw him do it one day when he had left his watch out. But he's away just now. I have no doubt though, that wretched little muff Gray could do it easily enough."

"Fetch him here, and make him do it," said Heath.

"There go two words to that bargain," returned Fox. "I doubt we shouldn't get him to come, in the first place."

"Why not?" said Heath impatiently. "He durstn't refuse."

"Why, you see he sleeps in Tyrrell's room, and Tyrrell has taken him up a good deal lately. It is as likely as not he would ask who wanted Gray, and for what; and when he found out, would say he shouldn't go."

"Confound that Tyrrell!" exclaimed Heath impatiently. "He is always in our way. Well, is there any one else in the school who would do as well?"

"Well, no," replied Fox, "I doubt if there is. You see the bars are very near together, and it is a closish thing getting even a little fellow like Dawes or Gray through. A bigger fellow certainly could not do it."

"Then he must come," said Heath. "We are not going to have our fun spoiled to please the fancies of a fellow like Tyrrell. Send a message up to Gray, to tell him some one wants him—say Winter wants him—that will do. He will be sure to come then; and Tyrrell will suspect nothing, because Gray is constantly being sent for to Hiems's study."

"Well, we can do that," said Fox. "But then there is another thing; I have my doubts whether the stupid little muff won't refuse."

"Refuse, hey?" said Heath, with another of his short laughs. "If he does I'll undertake to get through the bars myself. I never refused when I was a junior to do what the big fellows ordered me, and I should have got a proper licking if I had. And I am not going to let the juniors refuse to do what I order them now. No, by Jove, not if I know it."

Fox went off to put Heath's commands into execution. It should be observed, that he had stated what was not strictly true, when he said that he doubted whether any other boy besides Freddy could be squeezed through the bars of the play-ground gate. There were one or two of the smaller Brunswickers

who were as thin, if not quite as short, as he was, and it was a question rather of breadth than of height. But Fox bore Gray a double grudge; first, because of the humiliation he had undergone at Tyrrell's hands on his account; and secondly, because he had nearly got him into a serious scrape with Mr. Mayhew, by refusing to endorse the false statements made by the other boys. Deeper down than this, and scarcely recognized by himself, there was another feeling, which had its share in inducing him to select little Gray as his instrument on the present occasion. Freddy's courageous truthfulness was a secret but keen reproach to his own laxity of principle. Not but what he thought the boy to be an arrant little humbug, and his refusal to act like the other fellows mere hypocrisy. Still he did not choose to have him setting himself up as better than others. He was resolved to bring him down, in the eyes of every one, to his own level.

He did not find the difficulty which he had anticipated in carrying out his scheme. It was true, as Heath had said, that Mr. Winter had frequently of late sent for Gray to his study. It had not escaped the usher's watchful eye, that Freddy's natural delicacy of constitution scarcely accounted for the emaciation and languor which were evidently increasing on him; and for the last fortnight he had noticed occasionally a sharp, hacking cough, which he did not at all like to hear. Satisfied that there was mischief which required immediate attention, he had spoken that evening to Dr. Brooksbank, and it had been arranged that the doctor

was to see Freddy to-morrow. Some hint of this had been given to the boy himself; so that he had no sooner received a message to the effect that Mr. Winter wanted him, than he resumed the clothes which he had almost taken off, and without demur accompanied the messenger.

He was rather surprised not to be taken to Mr. Winter's room; and still more when, on entering the schoolroom, he found himself in the grasp of two big fellows, who catching him up in their arms, hurried to the end of the passage leading to the play-ground, and set him down before the iron gate.

It was a dark evening, and there was no lamp in the passage. Freddy looked round him in some little alarm, which was increased by perceiving that he was standing in the middle of a group of three of the biggest boys, whose faces he could hardly discern by that light.

"Gray," said one of the tallest of the party, whose voice he recognized as that of Heath, "we are going to put you through the bars of the gate. But don't be frightened. No one means to hurt you. We have left some ginger-beer bottles at the end of the play-ground, and can't get through ourselves to fetch them. You must go down to the corner near the poplar, and there you will find the bottles, lying or standing on the ground. Untie the string fastened to them, and bring them here."

Before the bewildered boy could take in the meaning of what was said to him, he was lifted by the two others, and slipped between the bars.

"Now run and fetch the bottles," said Heath.

Gray hesitated before complying. "There isn't anything wrong, is there?" he stammered.

"Wrong, you little idiot! What should be wrong? It is all right. Only make haste, and don't keep us waiting."

Half assured and half perplexed, the little boy obeyed; and ran as fast as the imperfect light would allow him to the place indicated. He had no hat on his head, and his feet were only protected by slippers. The boys, to do them justice, had not noticed this; nor did they consider that the rain was falling steadily, and the long grass underfoot soaking wet, or they might have desisted from their design. Before Freddy reached the corner where the bottles had been deposited, his feet were wet through, and the water streaming from his head. He found them however without difficulty, and disengaging them from the strings, returned as quickly as he could. But short as the time of his absence had been, it had been too long for the impatience of his schoolfellows.

"What a time you have been!" exclaimed one of them angrily. "Here, hand them up, and let us get a hold of you, and hoist you in again. There, that will do," continued the same speaker, as Gray was once more deposited on his legs on the right side of the gate. "Now you had better cut off to bed again as quick as you can, instead of shivering there like a drowned rat. Who has got the bottles?"

"I have," said another of the party—no other than

Fox, who had been removing the corks. "It is all right. These two are the brandy, and these the rum: capital spirit it is!"

"Brandy! spirit!" exclaimed Freddy Gray, starting from the stupor which still appeared to hang round him. "Why, you told me it was ginger-beer! I am sure you said it was ginger-beer. If I had thought"——

"What is it to you what it is, you young whelp?" said Heath, interrupting him. "No one wants you to pay for it, or to drink it either. Be off, do you hear?"

"He'll go and tell Winter, if we don't mind," said Fox.

"Oh, will he? I think I see him," said the former speaker. "Here, you Gray, do you hear? Promise that you won't say anything about this."

"I won't unless I am asked," said Gray.

"And if you *are* asked, what then—what then—do you hear?" exclaimed Heath roughly, and catching Freddy sharply by the wrist.

"I shall tell the truth," said the little fellow faintly, for the excitement and exposure to the wet had begun to tell upon him.

"That is to say, you will tell of us, and get us flogged, and perhaps expelled. I think I see myself letting you do that, don't I? Just give me that riding-whip there. We'll soon set this right. Now, will you promise to say nothing about this if the masters ask you?"

Freddy made no reply; and the whip, which had been

raised high in air, came smartly down on the little boy's back, making him wince and writhe with the pain.

"That is enough, I expect, isn't it? You'll promise now, won't you?"

No answer again, and a second cut sharper than the first, followed by a shrill cry from the sufferer.

"I say, hadn't you better leave him alone?" remonstrated Gore, who was the third of the party. "Most likely he will never be asked if we let him go. But if he makes a great row now, and any one hears him, it is just the very thing to get us in for it."

"You be hanged, Gore!" exclaimed the other angrily. "I am not going to be beaten by an obstinate young devil like this! As for their hearing us, that's all my eye! There's the schoolroom, and the passage, and the dining-room all between us. Now, you young beast, I am going to give you the last chance, do you hear? Will you promise to say nothing about this if you are asked?"

"I shall speak the truth," said Freddy again, but this time hardly able to pronounce the words.

A shower of stinging cuts succeeded, which was only stopped by Gore's seizing his arm, and exclaiming, "You really must leave him alone now, Heath. The boy has fainted."

"Fainted! that's all his gammon," exclaimed Heath. "A sharp prod or two will soon bring him to." But the tone of his voice did not sound as though he felt the confidence he affected; and a hasty examination showed that Gore was right. The boy had undoubtedly

swooned. The others, a good deal alarmed at this unforeseen *contretemps*, endeavoured to remedy the mischief as well as they were able. They loosened Gray's cravat, threw some water in his face, and lastly, poured a spoonful of brandy down his throat. Presently the boy began to show symptoms of returning animation.

"Take him upstairs," whispered Heath, "and as soon as he has quite recovered himself, open the door, and shove him in. Ten to one Tyrrell is sound asleep by this time; and to-morrow Gray will be all right again, I'll be bound."

Fox accordingly undertook to perform this office. He conveyed Freddy upstairs, half carrying, half leading him; while the others adjourned, with what appetite they might, to partake of the supper in the Long Room, which had been awaiting them for a good half-hour past.

We say, "with what appetite they might," because there was more than one drawback to the merriment of the party. Almost all those present belonged to the A side, and they by no means relished the defeat they had sustained at the hands of those whom they regarded as decidedly their inferiors. Then again, the absence of three of the first class was an altogether unprecedented circumstance; and the defection of Stapleton in particular, who was the life and soul of such gatherings, was greatly felt. Nor were those who had but a few minutes before taken part in the persecution

of little Gray, over well pleased with their evening's work, though they had no idea of the extent of the mischief done. The mirth of the supper-table decidedly hung fire; and it was not until dishes and knives had disappeared, and had been succeeded by punch-bowl and glasses, that the drooping spirits of the company began to revive again. Schoolboys, however, are like weeds in May. You may keep them down for a little while, but no power on earth will keep them down long. If the sword of Damocles itself had been suspended over the heads of our youthful revellers, they would have forgotten its existence in half an hour, as completely as if it had been a gas lamp. They were soon in the full swing of jest and laughter; three talkers at the least to one hearer, and each of the three trying to outdo the other two in the vehemence of his assertions, and the marvellousness of his narrations. The confusion was at its height, when to the great surprise and consternation of the boys, the door at the bottom of the staircase was heard to open, and heavy footsteps followed, as of persons ascending the stairs. Right and left flew the boys, nimble as minnows when a net is dropped among them. Wine-glasses, tumblers, and bowl disappeared with a sleight of hand which Herr Frikkel himself in later times might have envied: and when the door opened, not a vestige remained of the illicit luxuries wherewith the table had been laden but a minute before. The evidence of the sense of smell, however, is not so easily suppressed as that of sight; and it was,

therefore, with no slight feeling of relief that the boys perceived their unexpected visitors to be Nicolls and Brackley.

"We are in London for a week or so before joining again," said the latter, as soon as greetings had been exchanged, "and we meant to be in time for the Alphabet match; but there was only one place vacant by the afternoon coach when we got to the office, and we found that Mayhew wanted that; so we felt ourselves bound to let him have it."

"Mayhew, did you say?" asked Fox. "I hope he hasn't returned to Martin's Green."

"He has though, as we know to our cost," said Brackley. "We have been obliged to wait more than three hours in London in consequence. I suppose the match is decided by this time. We have been taking tea with Brooksbank, and he gave us leave to come and see you here. But he didn't know whether the match was over or not."

"Yes, it's over," said Heath, with an awkwardness in his manner; "we finished it this afternoon."

"And I take it for granted the A's have won," pursued Brackley. "I heard from the Doctor that Rivers has left. I shouldn't have backed the N's, if I had known that. They must have been quite overmatched without him."

"No, the N's have won," said Heath, in the same tone as before. "We were unlucky."

"And some of our side played first rate," added

Walker, who was one of the few N's present. We beat them by eight wickets."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Brackley. "Why, then, I must be a guinea or two richer than I had expected to be. You and I had a bet on it, Heath, had we not?" he continued, taking his betting-book out of his pocket. "Yes, double or quits, I see, of the guinea you owed me on the steeple-chase."

A smile went round the table at this announcement; for the secret of Heath's excessive eagerness to win the Alphabet match was now explained; and one or two were far from displeased that his sharp practice had failed of attaining its object. Heath himself did not appear to notice it. He drew out his purse, and replied, with seeming nonchalance,—

"Yes, I am sorry to say it is a true bill against me, as Billy Waters says. I owe you two guineas, sure enough. Here they are;" and taking out the sum named, he handed it to Brackley.

"You're a gentleman, sir," said Brackley pocketing the money. "And, Gore, I had the same wager with you, hadn't I? Yes, I see it was double or quits with you both to the same amount."

All eyes were turned on Gore, who had been keeping himself as much out of sight as possible since Brackley's entrance. He now got up. "It is all right," he said; "I haven't the money here, but I will go and fetch it."

A sarcastic smile gathered on Heath's lips. "He

will be gone some time, I expect," muttered he to himself. "I hope Brackley is in no hurry to get back to London."

The other boys did not appear to share his suspicions, and Gore's departure excited no remark. The conversation was soon resumed, and, enlivened by the punch, (which, to Fox's great satisfaction, the two visitors pronounced excellent,) soon engrossed the attention of all. The Hussars made many inquiries as to the particulars of the Alphabet match; and were requested in return to furnish a full and particular account of the steeple-chase, which Nicolls, nothing loath, straightway commenced. "It was a regular do," he said, "for the knowing ones. The man who was to have ridden Blucher fell ill at the last moment, and they were obliged to put a fellow on him who had never crossed his back before. He didn't know that though he was a first-rate fencer, he was not so good at the wide leap. In consequence, he didn't press him at the brook, and Blucher slipped back into it. Then Wildfire, they suppose, sprained her shoulder at the ox-fence, and couldn't get over the last leap. It was rather a near thing between Crabtree and Drummer-boy; but Charley Barnes, who rode Crabtree, was a knowing hand, and brought in his horse just a winner by sheer good riding."

"And how about Field Marshal?" inquired Bishop rather maliciously. "Didn't he show in front at all?"

Nicolls laughed. "You must ask Brackley about him," he said; "that is a subject on which I am mum."

"I don't know why you should be," exclaimed Brackley. "Field Marshal was worse ridden than even Blucher, and the best horse in the field badly ridden can do nothing—every one knows that."

"No doubt," said Nicolls demurely. "I don't dispute it."

"Well, but tell us what happened to him, at all events," said another of the party.

"I'll tell you," said Brackley, observing that Nicolls continued silent. "There is a stupid lubber of a fellow always hanging about the officers' stables, who talks by the yard about his riding. He beset me to let him ride Field Marshal, and I was fool enough to take him at his own valuation"——

"He won two steeple-chases last year, one open to all horses," interpolated Nicolls.

"So he says," retorted Brackley, "but I don't know who else vouches for it; anyhow, if he rode well then, he rode Field Marshal as badly as possible. He made the horse thoroughly savage before he came to the first fence, and put him at it just where it was highest. No wonder he couldn't clear it."

"None at all," assented Nicolls.

The cornet uttered a very unparliamentary expression. "I tell you, Nicolls, Field Marshal could have cleared that fence as easily as possible if he had been properly ridden. If Heath here had ridden him, he'd have gone over it like a bird. He'd beat your favourite May Blossom at a leap any day."

"Beat May Blossom at a leap!" exclaimed Nicolls. "Come, that is too strong, Brackley. You know May Blossom is the best fencer in our stables. I didn't enter her for the steeple-chase, because I knew she couldn't go the pace against Wildfire and Blucher; but as for fencing, Wildfire herself is hardly her match."

"Very well, Nicolls, let us try it. Both the horses are in London; we'll bring them down, and try them on Barker's Common for an even twenty, any day you like."

"With all my heart," cried Nicolls, "and the sooner the better. We'll send a fellow with some hurdles or a bar, and put up a leap. There's a good stretch of turf on the common; just the place for trying it."

"You needn't take anything there," said Heath. "Several fences, some of them pretty stiff ones, have been put up there this spring. There's a fellow who they say wants to enclose it."

"All the better," said Brackley. "What day shall we name, Nicolls?"

"I don't care," replied Nicolls. "Saturday, the day after to-morrow, if you like."

"Say Monday," urged Fellowes. "Monday is a half-holiday—old Brooksbank's birthday, you know. All the school will have leave to go out in the afternoon, and then we can see the match. Any other day we should be prevented."

"Very well," said Brackley. "I have no objection if Nicolls hasn't."

"None in life," returned Nicolls. "Monday, then, be it, weather permitting, at three o'clock, on Barker's Common. Tom Lawes will ride for me. Whom do you mean to put on Field Marshal, Brackley?"

"I don't know yet;" replied Brackley; "but as there is no restriction to weight, there is no need to name the riders. Let any one we like ride, I say. Have you any objection?"

"Certainly not," said Nicolls. "Well, that is settled, then; and now I think it is time that we should be going. We shall have the Doctor coming to look after us, and make sure that we are not corrupting the morals of his pupils."

They were rising to take their leave, when Heath interposed. He had been carefully watching Gore while this conversation was passing, and noticed that about a quarter of an hour after his departure, he had returned, and resumed his place at the table. Heath was puzzled at his re-appearance. Had he really contrived to borrow the money, as he had been talking of doing; or had he been deceiving him throughout, pretending that he was unable to raise the sum he required, while he had it all the while snugly in his purse? or did he, again, hope that the two young officers would take their leave to the Brunswickers without recurring to the subject of his debt? Gore's demeanour, as he scrutinised him closely, did not favour either of the two former suppositions. He

was evidently flurried and nervous, and filled his glass so often as to provoke the remonstrances of his neighbours. "He has failed in obtaining it," was Heath's internal comment, "and has slunk quietly back, thinking that his return is less likely to be noticed than his protracted absence." Heath, however, was not disposed to let him escape. He had resented his interference in behalf of Freddy Gray, and was particularly provoked of his having kept the affair of the purse from him. As the guests got up to say good-bye, he observed carelessly, but in a tone which every one could hear,—

"By the by, Brackley, Gore and I paid you our wagers, did we not? Oh, yes," he resumed, a minute afterwards, affecting to look at his purse; "I see I have, at all events."

"All right," said Brackley; "you paid me, certainly; but I don't think somehow that Gore did."

"No," said Gore quietly, though with a look at Heath which showed that he fully understood the other's malicious motive. "I had not got it with me at the time, but I have brought it now;" and as he spoke he put the sum named into Brackley's hand.

"He must have got old Hiems to lend it him, after all," thought Heath, as the party left the Long Room, and dispersed to bed. "Well, soft as Hiems is, I didn't think he'd have come into that. I wonder what precious story Gore trumped up to get him to do it?"

CHAPTER XX.

SENDING TO COVENTRY.

MRS. BROOKSBANK was seated in her sanctum at half-past seven in the morning, overlooking the clothes which were about to be sent to the wash, and taking careful note of the buttonless sleeves, torn collars, and ink-begrimed wristbands which were heaped in prodigal abundance before her. Long experience of the ways of boys had taught her that most difficult of all virtues, toleration; and she only shrugged her shoulders, or turned up her eyes in patient wonder, when some shirt-front displaying a gaping wound which had laid it open from shoulder to shoulder, or a pair of stockings "punched full of deadly holes,"—the result, apparently, of playing prisoner's base without shoes,—was submitted to her view. But even her philosophy was sorely tried by the condition of the linen brought for examination that morning. As has been already intimated, heavy rain had set in on the previous afternoon almost immediately after the conclusion of the cricket match. But the majority of the boys, instead of seeking the shelter of the house, had amused themselves by what they were pleased to term a "chivy;" that is, a species of steeple-chase over the ploughed fields and ditches at the back of Brunswick House.

The soil in that neighbourhood being for the most part a heavy blue clay, of a highly tenacious character, the condition of their clothes, on their return home, transcended all power of description. Tried by this extremity of provocation, the worthy lady looked round for her confidante, Martha, intending to fire a salvo of complaint into her, as the only suitable target against whom it could with any effect be directed. But she was fortunately absent; and the next minute a tap at the door was heard, and Tyrrell presented himself.

"I wish to speak to you, ma'am, or to Dr. Brooksbank, about Gray, the boy who sleeps in my room," he began. "I am afraid he is very ill, and some one ought to go to him."

"Dr. Haughton is to see him this morning," replied Mrs. Brooksbank. "He has got a cough, I know, and he is very delicate at all times. But do you mean that he is more than usually ill to-day?"

"I am afraid he is, ma'am. When I awoke this morning he was lying awake, as I thought; for his eyes were wide open, only they had a strange look in them, and he did not know me, or (so far as I could make out) even see that I was in the room. He had quite a colour in his cheeks, and his hands were dry and burning hot. He made no answer when I spoke to him, but began talking to himself in an odd, rambling way. I thought it better to come and tell you, instead of going down to the schoolroom."

"You did quite right, Tyrrell. I will go and see

him at once. Was he out yesterday in the rain, I wonder?"

"I think he must have been," said Tyrrell; "for I noticed that his shirt and stockings, which were lying on the floor, were soaking wet."

"Ay, ay," groaned Mrs. Brooksbank. "That's it, sure enough. What madness, to be sure! But boys will be boys: old or young, strong or weak, it's all the same. I only hope serious mischief may not have been done. I will go and see him immediately. I suppose he is still in bed?"

As Mrs. Brooksbank was leaving the room, she almost ran against her henchwoman, Martha, who hurried in full of the importance which an unexpected piece of news imparts to your thoroughgoing gossip.

"Oh, ma'am, and what do you think have happened?" she began. "There's Mr. Mayhew, the aromatical master—he've just come back, ma'am, and he've been asking all the servants if they've found his purse, ma'am, as he lost on the day he went away; yesterday, that is, was a week. I'm sure, as cook says, if any of the servants had picked it up, they'd have brought it to you or to the Doctor straightways, they would—or any of the young gentlemen either, to be sure, ma'am, meaning no offence to them by not mentioning them before. If I might speak my mind, as cook says——"

"What was the purse like?" inquired Tyrrell, interrupting.

"Well, Mr. Tyrrell, he says it were a brown leather purse, as opened and shut with a spring. But, as I said to cook, purses like that is as common as common; and who's to know one from another? If I might speak my mind——"

"Was there much money in it?" asked Mrs. Brooksbank.

"Well, ma'am, he says as they were a guinea and a half, one half-a-crown, two-shillings, and a sixpence; leastways, he's sure about the gold, but he cannot speak certain to the silver. Now, as cook truly says, if you can't speak certain, where are you? There's a many purses with money in them—gold and silver both; and some holds one sum, and some another. If I might be permitted to speak my mind——"

"I am sorry to interrupt you, Martha," said Mrs. Brooksbank, cutting short for the third time the expression of the worthy woman's mind. "But we must go and see Master Gray, who is, I am afraid, very ill;" and followed by her trusty attendant, she left the room, while Tyrrell descended the stairs to join his companions. He found that morning school was just over, but the boys had not yet left the schoolroom. Mr. Mayhew also was still at his post.

He went straight to his desk to take out the purse, which he had almost forgotten; the anxieties of the past week having driven everything else out of his mind. He was glad, however, now that he had said thing on the subject, as it was evident that it would

only have occasioned unnecessary trouble. Drawing the article in question out of the drawer in which it had been deposited, he leisurely opened it, to see whether Mr. Mayhew's report of its contents had been accurate. Yes, there was the half-crown, the two-shillings, and the sixpence. But the guinea and the half-guinea, where were they? Why what could this mean? They were gone. No, that was impossible. They must have slipped in between the pocket and cover of the purse, or dropped out into the drawer, when he last placed it there. But he searched every nook, first of the drawer, and then of the whole desk, as well as the purse itself, in vain. The two gold coins were certainly gone, and who in the world could have taken them? He believed that he had always been careful to fasten his desk, which shut with a spring lock. Certainly he had found it locked that morning; and it was only yesterday that he had ascertained with his own eyes the presence of the gold. While he sat musing over this strange mishap, he was suddenly startled by hearing his name called aloud. He looked round, and saw that it was Mr. Mayhew who had spoken.

"Tyrrell," said the usher, "I asked the boys during your absence, a quarter of an hour ago, whether any of them had seen a purse, which, so far as I know, I must have dropped on leaving Brunswick House last Thursday. They all tell me that they have not; but I have learned since from Heath, that you did find a purse on the day I have named. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir," replied Tyrrell, with an awkwardness of manner which was evident to all who saw him.

"You did? Why did not you publish the fact of your having found it? It would have saved a good deal of trouble, and some little ill-will."

Tyrrell did not know very well what to answer. His real motive had been unwillingness to follow Gore's suggestion. He could not, of course, assign that as the explanation of his conduct; and he was sensible that the reasons he had alleged to his two schoolfellows would not sound very convincing if he were to repeat them now.

"I don't quite know, sir," he replied at last. "I thought it was better not to mention it at first."

"Well, I don't agree with you; but at all events be so good as to bring the purse here now, and let me see if it is mine."

Tyrrell complied, but with the same air of embarrassment which had characterized him throughout.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Mayhew, as his eye fell on the purse, "that is mine sure enough. But, Tyrrell," he added, a moment afterwards, "the money is not right. There were a guinea and a half in it, unless I am greatly deceived; a guinea and a half, and about five shillings in silver. The silver is here, but not the gold. What has become of it?"

There was a dead silence through the school. Tyrrell coloured crimson, as he felt that every eye was fixed upon him, and it was with a great effort that he

answered at last, "I do not know. I have kept it locked up ever since I found it."

"You do not know? That is strange. Do you mean that you have never seen the guinea and a half at all? I may have been mistaken, of course——"

"No, sir," interposed Bishop, who had been standing by, listening to what was passing. "You are not mistaken about that, sir. Gore and I saw the purse almost immediately after Tyrrell found it, and I recollect quite well that the guinea and a half were there."

"And why did not *you* mention the finding of the purse at the time?" asked Mr. Mayhew, turning to the speaker.

"Tyrrell made us both promise that we would not. We advised him to put up a notice in the school about it; but he said he thought it best to say nothing about it for the present."

"On what day do you say this purse was found?" inquired Mr. Rawdon, who, accompanied by Mr. Winter, had come into the school-room and joined the party unperceived.

"Thursday last," returned the ciphering master, "the day on which I went away. I dropped it, no doubt, in the passage as I was hurrying out to join the coach."

"The afternoon coach?" pursued Mr. Rawdon.

"Yes, the afternoon coach," replied Mr. Mayhew. "Why do you ask that?"

"Then I suppose Tyrrell found this purse," pursued Mr. Rawdon, "when Mr. Winter and myself sent

him in from the Green, about four o'clock in the afternoon? Is that so, Tyrrell?"

"Yes, sir," returned the boy addressed.

"Hem! there is another question which I wish to ask you, Tyrrell. Do you remember that you were positively ordered not to go beyond the play-ground, until your debt to Giles was paid?"

"Yes, sir, I remember that."

"Indeed! Well, I was not on the Green yesterday afternoon, but I learn from Mr. Winter that you were out there, taking part in the match. Am I to understand that you have paid the money, which you then admitted that you owed?"

"Giles has been paid, sir," replied Tyrrell.

"He has? What was the amount of the debt? I am not sure that my memory is correct, and I should not like to make a mistake."

"A guinea and a half," answered the boy addressed; but as he named the sum, its strange identity with that now found to be missing occurred to him, and communicated additional awkwardness to his manner. It was evident that others besides himself noticed the coincidence. A most ominous silence ensued, which was at last broken by Mr. Winter.

"Tyrrell," he said, "I observed just now, that when Mr. Rawdon asked you whether you paid Giles, your answer was not that you had done so, but that 'Giles had been paid.' Why did you put it in that way? Did you pay Giles yourself?"

"No, sir."

"How then and by whom was he paid?"

"I do not know."

"You don't know? Surely that is strange, Tyrrell!" observed Mr. Mayhew. "How did you come to know that Giles had been paid at all, if you neither paid him yourself, nor know who did so?"

"He sent me a receipt for the money," replied Tyrrell. His manner, constrained, and to all appearance sullenly defiant, was greatly against him, and Mr. Mayhew proceeded in a severer tone than before.

"Sent you a receipt? Why did he send it to you if you did not pay the money?"

"I cannot say," answered Tyrrell shortly. "I did not ask him."

"That is not the way to speak, sir," said Mr. Rawdon, interposing. "Have the goodness to go and fetch the receipt of which you speak. I suppose you still have it by you?"

Tyrrell turned short round, and, walking straight to his desk, took out a written paper, which he handed to Mr. Rawdon without a word.

The three ushers examined it closely, and then conferred apart. "You see the name of the person who paid it is not mentioned," remarked Mr. Winter. "I do not think it impossible, or even very unlikely from what I know of Mr. Tyrrell, that he sent the money to Giles, and ordered him to forward the receipt to his son."

"Well, Winter, I can't agree with you," said Mr. Rawdon; "I wish I could. To me the whole thing is suspicious in the extreme. In the first place, there is his suppression of the fact of finding the purse. That isn't like a boy, in my opinion; nor does there appear to have been any motive for it, unless we suppose that he wanted to use the money for some purpose——"

"To be sure he might have intended to use it temporarily," said Mr. Winter, who remembered that Tyrrell had said something to him about finding "some other mode of paying Giles," if no one should advance him the money, and remembered also that he had said so on the very evening after finding the purse. "He might have intended to use it, meaning to replace it. That of course would be wrong, but not actual theft, like the other."

"Just so," continued Mr. Rawdon, "and he hoped that the owner would not turn up at all; or, at all events, not until he had got the money from some one, so as to be able to replace it. That would account also for the payment to Giles having been made, as it seems it was, anonymously."

"I don't agree in that," said Mr. Winter. "I cannot think him capable of low cunning, such as that would be."

"Well," said Mr. Mayhew, "I am afraid I must agree with Rawdon—to some extent, at all events. But I do not wish any further steps to be taken in

the matter. I cannot be positive that the guinea and a half were in the purse when Tyrrell found it; and it appears that it was in the hands of Bishop, and some other boy, as well as Tyrrell. They therefore might have abstracted it as well as he, and nothing could be more painful than throwing about suspicions from one boy to another. We can keep a sharp look-out on Tyrrell and the others. He is, in my judgment, but a poor dissembler, and if guilty will soon be found out."

"I have no objection," said Mr. Rawdon. "Boys," he added in a louder tone, you had better all of you go into the play-ground, and make the most of your time. It only wants twenty minutes to the school hour. Tyrrell, you can remain here if you like, and make a further search. If you should by any chance find the money, you will of course bring it to Mr. Mayhew."

"By the by, Winter," he resumed, after all the boys except Tyrrell had taken their departure, "do you know that little Gray is seriously ill?"

"I know he has been ill for some time past," said Mr. Winter. "Dr. Haughton was to see him to-day."

"Ah, but he is much worse than usual to-day. It seems he went out with a good many of the other boys in the rain yesterday evening, when he got wet through, and did not change his clothes till he went to bed. He awoke in a high fever this morning, and

Mrs. Brooksbank has sent off straight for Haughton a quarter of an hour ago."

"Poor little fellow!" said Mr. Winter; "there will be just time for me to go up and see him before school." "He has but a poor chance against fever, I am afraid," thought the usher as he ascended the stairs. "I doubt we shall ever see him in the schoolroom again, and yet I hardly know that I can wish him to get over it. It could only be for a few years, or more probably months, even if he did."

Freddy was lying broad awake, with Mrs. Brooksbank keeping watch over him, and Dr. Haughton standing at his bedside. The little boy's cheeks were hot and flushed, and there was a strange brilliancy in his eye, which told but too surely that fever had set in. He had been lying for some time in a dull stupor from the racking pain of his temples, but he brightened up a little when Mr. Winter entered, and feebly held out his hand to him. Dr. Haughton shook his head after feeling the pulse, and applying the stethescope to the chest of his little patient.

"Where do this boy's friends live?" he asked, taking Mrs. Brooksbank aside. "They ought to be written to forthwith. The fever will run as high, I expect, as the exhaustion of the system will permit; and there can be, I should fear, but faint hope of his rallying afterwards. There is deep internal mischief, over and above this present attack. Altogether I never saw a more alarming case."

"He has no near relatives or friends," said Mrs. Brooksbank. "Poor little fellow, he lost both his parents within a twelvemonth; the last of them a few months ago. His guardian is only a distant connection. He lives a long way off, and is a busy man. Dr. Brooksbank will of course write to him, but I should doubt his being able to come."

"Poor little boy!" said the doctor compassionately. "Well, my dear madam, all that can be done is to keep the room as cool and quiet as possible for the next few days. Delirium will probably set in before evening, though I scarcely think it will last very long. I was going to say, let no one but the nurse and yourself enter the room, but I think I must make an exception in Mr. Winter's favour; the little fellow is evidently fond of him, and he has, it seems, but few friends."

Mrs. Brooksbank looked towards the bed, and saw that Freddy had clasped the usher's hand as he sat beside him, and was leaning his cheek against it. The tears came into her eyes as she replied,—

"Yes, Mr. Winter is greatly beloved by many of the boys, and has always been very kind to little Gray. I have no doubt he will come and see him as often as he can."

In the meantime a different scene was passing in the play-ground, to which the boys had retired in obedience to the order of the ushers. There was no time to commence any game before school, and a

group, consisting chiefly of the first and second class scholars, had assembled round a large seat which stood under one of the trees. The topic of their conversation was, naturally enough, the disappearance of Mr. Mayhew's money from the purse found by Tyrrell. The boys in general were disposed to take Mr. Rawdon's view of the matter, or even a more severe one; for Tyrrell was generally unpopular with the Brunswickers, and one or two were his bitter enemies.

"It is very well for him to say he doesn't know what has become of the money," remarked Fox. "If he doesn't, every one else does, I expect."

"I always thought Giles's being paid as he was, just in time for the match, a very suspicious thing," said Heath. "I know Tyrrell had made up his mind that he would play yesterday, come what might."

"Yes, and he is the sort of fellow that would sooner be hanged than be beaten," observed Fellowes. "But the most suspicious thing, to my mind, is his having made you two fellows promise to say nothing about finding the purse. What on earth induced you to agree to it?"

"Well, he made such a point of it," said Bishop, "that we didn't like to refuse, and I for one didn't see that any harm would come of it. Of course we couldn't guess that he meant to pay old Giles with the money he had found—could we, Gore?"

"We don't exactly know—we are not quite sure,

that he did pay Giles with it," said Gore. "For my part I think he might have dropped it somewhere; or perhaps Mr. Mayhew was mistaken in thinking that there were a guinea and a half-guinea in the purse."

"Mistaken!" exclaimed Bishop. "Why I saw the money with my own eyes, and so did you, Gore. Do you mean to say you did not?"

"I couldn't be sure. I shouldn't like to take my oath to it," said Gore; "and besides, as I said before, even if it was there, he might have dropped it out of the purse on the way to the schoolroom."

"It would have been certain to be found by some one," said Heath, "if it had been dropped in the house, and whoever found it would have mentioned it."

"I don't see that," said Stapleton. "You all of you, except Gore, seem to be in a great hurry to make out that Tyrrell has stolen the money. But I don't see any proof at all: and I think he has always shown himself as honourable a fellow as any one in the school. He might have dropped it out of the purse, as Gore suggests, before he put it away; or again, somebody might have taken it out of the purse while it was in his drawer."

"No, that could not be," said Gore hastily. "He said expressly that he had always kept his desk locked, you know."

Heath glanced keenly at the speaker, though he made no remark; but Stapleton exclaimed at once, "If he did, that surely does not look as though he

had taken it. If he had been guilty, he would have tried to make out that somebody else might have got at the purse. I don't think we have the slightest ground for suspecting Tyrrell at all."

This was carrying the advocacy of his friend's cause too far; and, as is generally the case, did not assist it. "Well, Billy," said Robinson, who had hitherto said nothing, "I am inclined to agree with you so far, that I think there is no proof against Tyrrell; but I really can't say there is no ground for suspicion. This is a serious matter, and some step ought to be taken about it. The majority of those who have spoken seem to think Tyrrell guilty; but there are a good many who have said nothing as yet. I should like to ask you," he continued, turning to a knot of boys, consisting of Hall, Middleton, Walker, and one or two others, "what you think of it?"

"My opinion is, he took it," said Hall.

"I think it is very suspicious," cried Middleton.

"And so do I," "and I," "and I," chorussed a number of voices. "And I think Tyrrell ought to be sent to Coventry by the whole school," added Fox; which sentiment received a considerable, though not universal approval.

"It is a shame!" shouted Stapleton indignantly, "an abominable shame! If you send him to Coventry, you may send me along with him. Robinson, I didn't think you could be so unjust. As for Heath here, he hates Tyrrell, as every one knows; and Fox

has had good reason to dislike him too. He'd like to serve him out now for one or two thrashings he has given him. I know all that well enough; but, Robinson, I thought you were more generous."

Robinson coloured a little. Perhaps his conscience warned him that he did not regard the rival, who had wrested the first-class prizes from him, with any great amount of favour. But he was an honourable-minded boy, and Stapleton's appeal was not made in vain.

"I hope I am not ungenerous," he said, more calmly than might have been expected. "As head boy it was my business to ask the other fellows what they thought about it. It does not follow that I concur in their opinion. But I have a suggestion to make, in which I hope we may all agree. You see the only ground on which Tyrrell can reasonably be suspected of taking the money is, that he wanted to pay Giles with it—in fact, that he *did* pay Giles with it. Now I think the fairest thing will be for two of us to go down to Giles, and ask him who did pay him."

"Tyrrell will be sure to have made him promise to say, that it was some one else," objected Heath.

"Perhaps," said Robinson, "though I doubt whether Giles,—who doesn't at all like Tyrrell,—would consent to do so. But remember, he may have been paid by Tyrrell's father, or some other person, who has evidently had no communication with Tyrrell on the subject. In that case I think we ought all of us

fully to acquit him of any suspicion. On the other hand, Giles may refuse to say who it was; and may further refuse to say that it was not Tyrrell, in which case it will be a very suspicious business; or, once more, he may even inform us that it *was* Tyrrell."

"You heard Tyrrell himself deny that he had paid it," interrupted Stapleton.

"Just so, Stapleton; that would only make the case stronger. Well then, if we find that Tyrrell did pay it himself, it will amount to such strong evidence against him, that the school ought in my opinion to send him to Coventry. But I must add, that for my part, I don't believe you will find that Tyrrell did pay him. What do you think of my proposal?"

"I think it a fair one, and does you honour, Robinson," said Stapleton. "I for one am willing to abide by it."

"And so am I," said Gore, evidently somewhat to the surprise of Heath, who again turned a scrutinizing look upon him.

Several others of the boys, foremost among whom was Bishop, also expressed their approval.

"And who is to see Giles on the subject?" asked Robinson.

"You yourself, Robinson," cried several of the boys.

"I have no objection," said Robinson, "but I would rather some one went with me. Will you go, Stapleton? As you are Tyrrell's friend in the matter, it is fair that you should."

"I will do so most willingly," returned the boy addressed. "We will get leave to go out immediately after dinner, and come back and tell you all what we have heard as soon as possible."

The others assented to this, and the school-bell ringing almost immediately afterwards, the boys returned to the house.

It was with feelings of more than ordinary interest that the Brunswickers assembled under the play-ground trees that afternoon to await the return of their emissaries. The feeling against Tyrrell perceptibly abated as the day passed on. It was more personal dislike, than the facts of the case, which had induced the greater part to join in the outcry against him; and as excitement cooled down, they began to perceive this fact, and feel somewhat compunctious about it. Tyrrell was a haughty and ungracious fellow, and they would like to see his pride brought down; but in their cooler moments they could scarcely believe him capable of theft. All that was known about him discouraged such a notion. As they sat or lounged in every variety of attitude, awaiting impatiently the reappearance of Robinson and Stapleton—who had been away more than twice the time assigned as the probable limit of their absence—the opinion almost unanimously expressed was, that Tyrrell would be honourably acquitted. But a great surprise awaited them. At the end of another quarter of an hour the two first-class boys entered the play-ground;

but the expression of their faces, particularly that of Stapleton, was one of mingled astonishment and vexation.

"Well, Robinson," said Heath as they came up, "have you found out who paid Giles?"

"I am sorry to say we have," returned Robinson. "Giles made no sort of difficulty in answering the question. He had been paid by a letter containing the money, and received it as far back as this day week,—Friday, that is the 14th."

"The day after Tyrrell found the purse," observed Heath.

"Just so," resumed Robinson. "But the letter was dated Thursday. To prevent all possibility of mistake, Giles gave me the paper—it is rather a written paper than a letter—in which the money was enclosed. I will read it out to you:—

> 'From Wm. Tyrrell; the amount of his debt. April 13th, 18—. Be good enough to acknowledge its receipt.'

I am sorry to say neither Stapleton nor myself has the least doubt that it is Tyrrell's handwriting. But you can look at it yourselves."

The boys crowded round the letter. There could be no question about it. Tyrrell's handwriting was peculiar, and could hardly be mistaken. It was certainly his.

"Well, then," said Heath, when the first excitement had a little subsided, "I conclude the resolution to

which we came, in event of its being proved that Tyrrell did pay Giles the money, will be carried out?"

"Yes," said Stapleton sadly; "I agreed, and I shall keep to my agreement."

"Then Tyrrell is to be sent to Coventry by the whole school," said Robinson in a loud tone. "You hear that, all you fellows?"

"Yes," said Bishop, "we hear it, and we mean to act upon it too." And a general murmur ratified his words.

CHAPTER XXI.

GORE'S COMPUNCTION.

THE resolution arrived at in the last chapter was at once put into execution, with all the demonstrativeness which boys love to display on such occasions. Tyrrell was never invited to take part in any of the games, either in the play-ground or on the Green. If he approached any group of boys who were talking together, the group dissolved itself forthwith. The Brunswicker who chanced to find himself next to Tyrrell in the school-room or elsewhere, vacated his place as speedily as he could; and if he addressed a question to any of his school-fellows, it received either no answer at all, or the coldest and shortest that could be returned. Most boys would have perceived the ban under which they lay very soon after its proclamation; but Tyrrell joined so little in the amusements of the school, and was himself so reserved in his intercourse with others, that it was some time before he discovered the fact. It was not until the Sunday morning, when the boys were being marshalled in the order which time-honoured tradition prescribes as the only fitting one for walking to church in—viz., two and two, the pairs being made up of boys as nearly

of the same height as possible—that the real state of things dawned upon him. He not only found himself alone in his glory, but perceived that an elaborate arrangement had been adopted for the express purpose, evidently, of leaving him in that position. Stapleton, who had almost invariably of late been his companion, had now attached himself to Bishop; while Bishop's old associate, Fellowes, had taken up with a boy of the second class. He was obliged to walk alone to church, and would have had to sustain the same ordeal on his return, if Mr. Winter, who had noticed the manœuvre of the boys, and suspected the meaning of it, had not relieved him from his embarrassment by inviting the individual thus tabooed to walk with him.

Tyrrell did not very clearly understand the cause of this marked avoidance. He concluded in a general way that it had something to do with the discovery of Mr. Mayhew's purse, and the disappearance of the money. But it did not occur to him as possible that his school-fellows suspected him of having stolen the money; and when at length it was made clear that this was the explanation of their demeanour towards him, his scorn and indignation rivalled that of Coriolanus himself. Not a syllable did he deign to say on the subject to high or low. But there was a curl of his lip, and a look about the corner of his eye, as Hunter expressed himself, which warned the Brunswickers of the expediency of confining hostilities

to what might be called defensive warfare, in preference to carrying them into the enemy's country. But though Tyrrell's outward bearing was calm and defiant, his real feeling was very different. Despise opinion as he might, he was keenly alive to unkindness, and there were two or three among the Brunswickers for whom he had entertained a strong regard. He had not thought that they would be induced to acquiesce so readily in a belief so monstrous. In particular he was deeply pained by the defection of Stapleton; and ignorant altogether of the overwhelming evidence, as it appeared, which had been laid before the boy in question, and of his zealous efforts in his friend's cause until compelled to abandon it, he thought himself capriciously and treacherously deserted. But the notion of attempting to clear himself, or even of remonstrating with his quondam friend, appeared intolerable to him. If Stapleton should express regret for the unfounded belief which he had allowed himself to entertain, and ask to be re-admitted to his friendship, then he might consent to overlook his offence against him. But this was the utmost to which he could bring his pride to submit; and the reader will probably be of opinion that under the circumstances it was no very great concession.

The only boy at Brunswick House in whom Tyrrell now felt any warm interest was Freddy Gray; and it added a pang to the distress he already felt, when he learned from Mrs. Brooksbank, on the Sunday

morning, that the little fellow had been wandering in his head all Saturday afternoon, and the greater part of the night, and did not recognize even Mr. Winter. The usher had been with him several times on Saturday, and had sat up the greater part of the night by his bedside. They were in hopes, from what Dr. Haughton had said, that the boy would shortly recover his senses; but there was the greatest fear—in fact, there was but small hope that he would be able to recover even the little strength he had possessed before the attack. Tyrrell returned sadly to his desk, feeling, as we all do when we are in danger of losing some familiar face for ever, that he had never done poor little Freddy's quiet affection the justice it deserved. Doubtless the unusual isolation from all his other school-fellows heightened the feeling; but it seemed strange to him how much he missed the little companion, who for many weeks past had rarely been long absent from his side.

The news of Gray's dangerous illness had by this time spread through the school, though the more immediate cause of it was still unknown. It had been assumed by Mrs. Brooksbank, and by her communicated to the ushers and boys, that Freddy had joined the chivy on the Thursday evening, and had come home, like the others, wet through. The story generally passed current, though it excited some surprise. But the reader need not be told that there were three of the boys, who knew that the true explanation of his

exposure to the rain was altogether different. Fox heard of the serious illness which had ensued with a dull sensation of uneasiness. If Gray should let out what had passed, he supposed they would all three catch it finely. And a pleasant thing that would be, by Jove! What a nuisance that young Gray was! If he had only guessed it, he would have sent Downes or Tommy Ellis. But how on earth was he to know that the little beggar would catch a cold like that? They oughtn't to send such sickly young muffs to Martin's Green; and if they did, they ought to be answerable themselves for what happened to them. Such was the purport of Fox's meditations on the subject.

But the feeling with which Gore heard of Freddy's extreme danger was very different. Burdened though his conscience was by other recollections, which drove ordinary considerations into the background, the remembrance of Freddy Gray's trembling figure and pleading voice occurred to him again and again, and caused him so much remorse, that he felt strongly disposed to go to Mr. Winter, and entreat him to obtain for him Freddy's forgiveness of the injury he had done him. The notion that the little boy would die without having heard how sorry he was, and how anxious to be forgiven, was painful to him beyond endurance. Gore was not, as the reader must long ago have perceived, hardened in evil, but lamentably weak and undisciplined, — the easy tool of more

unscrupulous spirits than himself. And now every better feeling was roused within him, urging him to own his sin, and make what atonement he could. But there was one thing that prevented him, and that was his dread of Heath. The latter had obtained an ascendancy over him, which had been the silent growth of years, and had now reached such a height, that Gore, despite the agony of his conscience, could not wholly shake it off. After a long conflict with himself he resolved to seek Heath, and urge him to consent to an avowal of the truth as regarded the cause of Freddy's illness; or, if he would not consent to that, to permit him at least to tell his own share in the matter, conditionally on promising faithfully not to implicate any one else. Thus much, at least, he must be fully justified in demanding; nor could Heath reasonably object. Nay, even if he should object, Gore was resolved that he would not be prevented from doing it. He would do a good deal for Heath, but he would not go so far as that.

He looked out for an opportunity of speaking to Heath alone, and on the Sunday afternoon succeeded in obtaining one. Dr. Brooksbank had been sent for to take duty in a neighbouring church, and the first class, in consequence, enjoyed exemption from the usual Sunday lesson. The others had all gone out for a walk into the country; but Heath, who was expecting to receive some communication from Brackley, to which an immediate answer would

be required, had chosen to stay at home. Gore followed him into the play-ground, and as soon as they were seated on the bench under the poplar, opened the subject.

"I say, Heath, do you know Gray is very ill?"

"Is he worse to-day?" asked Heath carelessly.

"I don't know that he is," returned Gore, "but he is certainly no better; and yesterday they told me that there was scarcely the slightest hope of his recovery."

"Well, I'm not surprised. He always looked as if he hadn't an ounce of life in him. I rather wonder that he has gone on as long as he has."

"He is delicate, no doubt. But, Heath, you remember what took place just before this illness of his. Of course you do, though; you can't have forgotten it."

Heath turned sharply upon him. "What do you mean?" he asked angrily.

"Oh, it is of no use taking that line, Heath! You must remember that Gray got soaking wet on Thursday evening, through being sent to fetch those bottles from the end of the play-ground. The masters, and the fellows too, I believe, think that he went out with the others across the fields after the cricket match; but we know it was not so."

"*We* know, hey?" returned Heath coolly. "*You* know, I suppose you mean. I didn't put him through the gate that I am aware of."

"No, Fox and I did that," said Gore. "I might say that it was by your directions, if I chose; but I don't wish to——"

"That is lucky," said Heath parenthetically, "because you would have some difficulty in proving it."

"I say I don't wish to mention anything about your share in the matter. I don't wish to mention your name; or Fox's either, for that matter."

"Well," said Heath, in some surprise, "who supposed that you did want to mention either of our names, or anybody else's name either? What are you talking about?"

"Just this, Heath. I can't get out of my mind that Gray's illness—from which they think he won't recover—may have been caused by his being sent out in the rain without any hat that evening. He was made to go against his will, and we should have thrashed him if he had refused. I need not say any more on that part of the subject."

"Certainly not; nor on any other part, that I can see," observed Heath.

"But if that should be so," resumed Gore, "I should feel as though I had—unintentionally, of course—but still as though I had been one of the causes of—of his death. At all events, I feel that I—that we—have been very hard and unkind to him. I don't want to offend you, Heath, but I must say that."

"If you must say it, I suppose you must; but what

the meaning of all this may be, is more than I can see."

"The meaning is, that I could not, in that case, let him die without owning that I had been harsh and cruel, and entreating him to forgive me!"

"Phew!" said Heath, starting up in surprise; "here's a go, indeed! 'Owning that you have been cruel!' What is it you mean by that? You are not, I suppose, going to tell the whole story for old Winter to hear? for if you go talking in that way to Gray, he's safe to hear it. You are not going to blow upon the fact that Gray was put through the gate after it had been locked, in order to fetch in spirits—whereby you and I, and every one who was at the supper, would get into a most awful row? That isn't what you mean, I suppose?"

"No," said Gore, "I do *not* mean that. I don't mean to mention any one's name but my own. I shall take the whole blame myself. But,"—and Gore's tone became more excited as he went on—"but I could not let Gray die without his having forgiven me. I tell you I could not!"

Heath was silent awhile. Even he could not but feel some touch of the shame and remorse which weighed his companion down. But he was not at all inclined to let Gore involve him in what might be a most serious scrape. After a short pause, therefore, he said,—

"It is all very well, Gore, for you to talk about taking the whole blame upon yourself, as fellows do in books. But you can't do it; it is just so much gammon. Just think a moment. You can't make them believe you wanted four bottles of spirits for your own exclusive use. Why, it would be absurd to pretend it; and then, Gray was sent on the very evening, and the very hour of that evening, at which the supper began. Do you think Brooksbank and Winter are such fools that they can't put that and that together? As for Gray's illness, I don't see why you should fancy you caused that, any more than Fox or myself; in fact, I don't see why any of us should fancy we caused it. The doctor said that he has had the seeds of hopeless decline about him for six months past. I know he said that, for I heard Martha repeat his words. However, if you choose to imagine yourself the cause of his being ill, that is your own affair, and I shouldn't meddle with it. But when it comes to involving me and others in a tremendous row, that is another matter, and I'll take care it shan't be done. You'll just be quiet about it."

"Do you really think, then, that Gray's illness is not entirely owing to the wetting he got?" asked Gore eagerly.

"Didn't you hear me say so?" returned Heath. "Why, he had a cough before; every one says so. It's nonsense to think that five minutes in the open air would do all that mischief."

"I only hope that is true," said Gore. "But in any case, I will see Mr. Winter, and tell him my share in this—my share only, remember."

"I don't think you will," returned Heath coolly, "when you have considered the consequences a little. Remember, two can play at that game of telling things; and if I were to play at it, it would be rather an awkward job for you."

"Yes," said Gore sadly. "I know that you persuaded me to keep Tyrrell's letter back; and it did me no good, and poor Tyrrell a great deal of harm. I have often wished that that key had been red-hot when I took it from you. But I have sent the letter now. I sent it on Thursday evening; and though of course I should be severely punished for what I did, I declare I should not be sorry if you did tell all that happened, Heath."

"You have sent the letter, have you?" observed Heath, preserving his coolness of demeanour, though he was greatly annoyed at a step which threatened to extricate Tyrrell from his present painful position. "More fool you, that is all I can say. I shall take care, if there is a blow up, that you bear all the consequences of your own act. But, Gore, it was not what happened last Thursday fortnight that I referred to. It was something which occurred a good deal more recently. What do you think of my telling about what happened *last* Thursday?"

Gore turned deadly pale. "What do you mean?"

he asked in an agitated tone. "About sending Gray for the spirits——"

"Oh dear, no!" returned Heath, in a mocking tone; "nothing nearly so wicked as that: only about the money you borrowed that evening—to enable you to pay Brackley, you remember!"

"Money I borrowed!" stammered Gore.

"Yes, only you forgot to ask Tyrrell to lend it, you know," continued Heath, in the same tone as before. "There, you fool! Do you really think I didn't find it out, though I might choose for my own reasons to say nothing? I was sure of it the moment that I heard that Mayhew's money was missing, and saw your face. That skeleton key, which you complain of so much, has done you more services than one, I expect. It is rather ungrateful of you to complain of it."

"No, no!" exclaimed Gore; "I didn't use the key. I don't know how you discovered it, Heath; but I didn't open Tyrrell's desk. It was lying open as I went through the schoolroom to ask Mr. Winter to lend me the money. I suppose Tyrrell had left his desk unlocked by accident. But it was open, and I saw the drawer in which he had put the purse. I had already written to my mother to ask for the money, and I thought if I could only borrow it for two days, I should be all right."

"And so you 'borrowed it' out of Tyrrell's, or rather Mayhew's, purse, instead of going on to Winter,

hey? Well, I dare say that is all true enough; but that kind of borrowing is apt to be called by a very ugly name, my friend. I wouldn't advise you to oblige me to tell people that you had been 'borrowing' in that fashion!"

"Oh, Heath, you would not be so cruel! I got the money this morning, and am going to-night to slip it into Tyrrell's desk. He'll find it, and take it to Mayhew, and then it will be all right; and if it shouldn't be, and Tyrrell is still suspected, I'll tell the truth myself, and clear him."

"You had best leave it alone," said Heath. "Why you might be taken up and sent to gaol, and tried for it. A fellow has been hanged for stealing a less sum than that, I can tell you. I don't suppose you'd be hanged exactly, but you would very likely be sent to prison for a year or two: and that would be a pleasant thing, would it not? worse, I expect, than not getting Gray to pardon your offence, which I don't suppose he so much as knows that you committed. No, Gore, be quiet, and I will be quiet too. But if you were to peach about my affairs, I should peach about yours. Of that I am determined; and I expect you'd find you had got the worst of it. And now let us come to a plain understanding about this at once. Do you mean to agree to my terms, or not?"

"I suppose I must," said Gore sorrowfully. "It would be my ruin if you were to tell what you threaten, and if you are so unkind——"

"There, none of that stuff. You do agree, do you?"

"Yes," repeated Gore.

"Very well. And there is one thing more. You say you have got the guinea and half, and mean to put it into Tyrrell's desk to-night?"

"I do," replied the other.

"You mustn't do it, then."

"Mustn't do it! Why not?"

"I don't choose it."

"But why not, Heath?"

"I don't know that I need tell you that; but I will. I don't think Tyrrell's pride and insolence have been taken down enough yet. I owe him one for his impertinence at the skittle alley, and another for the Alphabet match; and I seldom forget to pay off my debts, and to pay 'em in full, too."

"But I got this money on purpose to return it to Tyrrell."

"I can't help that. I won't have you do it; not at present, that is. Perhaps by and by, when I think he has been punished enough, I may allow you to put it into his desk, as you propose, but not now."

"And what am I to do with it, then?" asked Gore, more disturbed than ever at this prohibition.

"What are you to do with it?" echoed Heath contemptuously. "I shouldn't think it was very difficult to know what to do with ready money! Suppose you wager it on the leaping match to-morrow. If you

would be guided by me, you might make a good thing of it. I know something——"

"No, no," exclaimed Gore, "never again! I will never bet again as long as I live, if I only once get out of this."

"As you please," remarked Heath, with his usual nonchalance; "it is no business of mine. If you don't choose to spend or venture your money, I suppose you must keep it. It is all one to me. But I can't stay here any longer. The fellows will be coming out of school in a minute or two, and I suspect there must be a note for me from Brackley by this time." And so saying, he rose and walked away in the direction of the house.

Gore looked after him with an expression of face which might have suited Faust, when he found himself betrayed by the fiend to whom he had sold himself. He felt that he was hopelessly in Heath's power. It was true enough, that although the evil had been in every instance suggested by Heath, he had never taken any active part in its actual perpetration. Heath might be censured, but he could not be punished; whereas the heaviest penalties would fall upon himself, if the whole should be disclosed. For a moment it did occur to him that it would be better to suffer any disgrace, and brave any punishment, than continue in such a bondage as that which Heath had imposed on him. But the influence of long habit is not to be so easily shaken off. Slowly and unwillingly

he abandoned the resolutions to which he had determined, not an hour ago, to cling so tenaciously. There was one thing, however, which it was still in his power to do—or rather, it would be more proper to say, there was one thing which he was fully resolved not to do, and that was, to spend the money sent to him by his mother for Tyrrell's repayment. After some consideration he went to his desk, and taking out the guinea and half-guinea which he had just received, he sealed them up carefully in an envelope, and went to seek for Mr. Winter.

He encountered that gentleman at the bottom of the bedroom stairs, looking grave and sad. In reply to his inquiry after Freddy Gray, the usher informed him that the delirium had passed away, and the patient, though extremely exhausted, was perfectly himself.

"He has been talking to me longer than he ought," added Mr. Winter; "but I could not stop him, poor little fellow, without causing him even more agitation than our conversation excited. He has now fallen asleep, and I am to see him again when he wakes, which I hope will not be for many hours. Meanwhile, can you tell me where Tyrrell is to be found?"

"A gentleman called to see him about an hour and a half ago," answered Gore, "and Dr. Brooksbank has given him leave to pass the day with him. He will not return till to-morrow morning. But,

Mr. Winter, I was going to ask you to be so kind as to take charge of this parcel. It is—something valuable, which does not belong to me, and I am afraid of losing it."

"Yes, if you wish it, I have no objection," said Mr. Winter. "Come with me into my room." Gore complied, and followed the usher into his study; and the latter, opening a drawer in his bureau, locked up the parcel.

"Is there anything else?" he asked, seeing that Gore still lingered.

"Do you think, sir—is there any hope, Mr. Winter—that Freddy Gray may, after all——"

"That Freddy Gray may recover, do you mean?" asked Mr. Winter kindly.

"Yes, sir, I had some hope——"

"You must lay it aside if you had, Gore. No human skill, nothing short of a miracle, can save him. He may live through to-day, and possibly—though the doctor scarcely thinks that he will—through to-morrow. But a day or two is the utmost that he can linger. Do not distress yourself so," added Mr. Winter, as he saw Gore cover his face, and noticed that his frame shook with emotion. "I did not know that you cared so much for him. But no one who does care for him will wish him to linger. He himself, believe me, wishes it least of all. He has always known that his life could not be a long one."

"Oh, Mr. Winter," said Gore, without raising his head, and half forgetting his promise to Heath, "I wasn't kind to him—I—I——"

"Do not make yourself unhappy," said the usher kindly. "We are none of us so kind to others as we should be, and we feel it when God takes them from us. I fear poor little Gray has suffered much—more than I had supposed,—from his school-fellows. His wanderings during delirium have revealed that to me. And there were some names he mentioned—I wish I could forget them. But yours was not among them. I do not think you need reproach yourself; unless," added he, his suspicions somewhat awakened by the extreme disquietude evinced by his visitor,—"unless there is something connected with his illness of which I am not aware, and in which you are implicated. If so——"

"No, sir, no," interrupted Gore, recovering himself as Mr. Winter approached the dangerous topic, and without trusting himself to add more, he quitted the study.

"He has always known that his life could not be a long one," thought he, as he walked away. "Then, after all, perhaps Heath and I have not really had anything to do with his illness. Yes, yes, that must be so; I cannot bear to think anything else!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST LEAP.

BARKER'S Common was in those days a long stretch of turf, overgrown in many places with patches of gorse and underwood, lying at a distance of about half a mile from Martin's Green. Forty years ago there were some twenty straggling cottages in its vicinity, possessing certain common rights over it, which prevented the land from being enclosed or built on. That difficulty has long been overcome; and in the spots where we were wont to lie in ambush at hide and seek, or over which we raced at hare and hounds, there now rise long rows of semi-detached villas, all stucco and bay-windows in front, all brown brick and nakedness behind, after the ordinary fashion of these suburban ornaments. A modern author has written a very graceful tale, I am told, about a semi-detached house. If so, the writer in question deserves as much credit as did the Princess in the fairy tale, who is related to have spun fine lawn shirts out of stinging-nettles. Of all the ingenious contrivances for the torment of that much-enduring animal, the British householder, there is none like the semi-detached house. Your neighbour on the other side of the miserably thin party-wall, which is

supposed to separate you from him, is not your neighbour in reality at all. He lives in the same house with you to all intents and purposes, except that you cannot control or remonstrate with him, as you can with your own household. Perhaps he is musical, and his piano sounds as though it were in your own drawing-room; perhaps he is convivial, and you might as well have his suppers laid out in your own dining-room; perhaps his children are given to squall at night, and if so, they might as well indulge their fancy by your own bedside. His drains are as your drains; his linen hung out to dry as your linen; his smoke descends your chimneys, and yours does the same good office for him, by a beautiful law of mutual accommodation. Before the expiration of a twelve-month you have ceased to send messages respecting the Cochin-China cock which crows half the night, or the arrows which Master Tom is in the habit of shooting through the greenhouse windows. You have given up even the last refuge of neighbourly intercourse, reciprocal complaint; and your guests wince nervously at the mention of his name, fearing that it will draw down the long catalogue of his offences on their devoted heads. I never see a row of semi-detached houses without thinking of two unlucky dogs coupled up together, the one pulling to the right, and the other to the left; the one eager for a race over the country, the other wanting to lie down and rest. The character of your neighbour is almost of as much

importance to you as that of the lady you are to marry; and it is quite as much a lottery whom you may get in the one case as in the other. Nay, you may rid yourself of your wife now-a-days after a while, if she misbehaves herself; but if your neighbour chances to have a long lease of his house, however outrageous may be his misconduct, you cannot get quit of him at all.

But, as has already been said, Barker's Common was innocent of these genteel penitentiaries at the time of which we write. The gorse and the broom grew undisturbed, forming snug nooks wherein pic-nics were wont, in summer days, to be enjoyed; nor had the destroying enemy given as yet any other sign of his approach than an occasional fence put up here and there—to be pulled down, in most instances, by the cottagers during the ensuing winter months; partly because they viewed them as invasions of their rights, and partly for the still simpler reason that they found the wood convenient for firing. The fences had a week or two ago been again erected, stronger and in greater number than before. At the joint request of Nicolls and Brackley, Heath had examined the ground on the Saturday previously, and had selected four leaps, which he thought would be certain to decide the question at issue. The first of these was tolerably easy; nor was it likely that either would find difficulty in clearing it. The second and third, though more trying, were still such as any well-bred horse,

properly ridden, might fairly be expected to surmount. But the fourth, which was a good foot higher than the others, was an awkward customer, at which an experienced Meltonian might have looked twice before he attempted it.

Full of excitement and eager anticipation, the Brunswickers hurried off in the direction of Barker's Common the moment that the gate had been set open. They were but a small party; for it had been agreed, among those present at the supper, that the secret should be carefully confined to those already acquainted with it. If it should become generally known, doubtless two-thirds at least of the school would be thronging down to witness the contest; in which case it could not fail to be discovered, and probably attendance at it interdicted by the masters. There were, in fact, not above a dozen boys present; for Bishop and Hall had been detained by Mr. Winter, and Gore had no inclination to join the party. None of the seniors of the school were there except Heath and Fellowes, who walked on in advance. The others, chiefly second-class boys, were full of a topic which, for a wonder, had no connection with the match they were about to witness.

"It is a very odd business about that money," remarked Walker, as they turned into the lane beyond the Green. "I always thought it a rum sort of go; but it is rummer than ever now, to my mind."

"About what money?" inquired Fox. "About

the money cribbed out of Mayhew's purse, do you mean?"

"Yes, to be sure," said the other; "no other money has been talked about, that I know of."

"Well, I don't see anything particularly odd about that," returned Fox. "Tyrrell took it to pay Giles what he owed him with it. That's simple enough, isn't it?"

"That *would be* simple enough, I dare say; but, you see, Tyrrell *didn't* pay Giles with it. He didn't pay Giles at all. Didn't you hear what Winter told the fellows just before school was up?"

"Not I. I went out with Heath to get ready, a quarter of an hour before the end of school-time. What did Winter say?"

"Why, that it was young Gray who sent the money to Giles, in Tyrrell's name, without his knowing anything about it."

"Young Gray! What should he do that for? That's not a very likely story, I think."

"Well, it's true, anyhow," interposed Hunter. "You see Hiems was sitting up with poor little Gray while his head was wandering, and heard him talking to himself about sending money to Giles, and clearing Tyrrell; and he asked him what it was that had been running in his head, when he came to himself this morning, and then Gray told him all about it. Tyrrell had been kind to him, and he wanted to help him out of his difficulty; but he was afraid to speak about it,

so he sent it in a letter of Tyrrell's, which had somehow got into his hands."

"Well, I still think that that sounds a very odd sort of story," said Fox; "but even if he didn't pay Giles with Mayhew's money, it doesn't prove that he didn't take it."

"It doesn't exactly prove it, I suppose," said Hunter, "but it removes the main ground of suspicion against Tyrrell. I saw Stapleton and Robinson go up and ask Tyrrell's pardon for having suspected him, after school."

"Yes, and properly stiff Tyrrell was," added Walker.

"I'd take my oath of that," said Fox. "And who do they think took the money, then?"

"That's just what no one can say. There are all sorts of stories about. Some fellows say Tyrrell has found the money, and has given it back to Mayhew; others, that he has paid it out of his own pocket. But it is quite certain, I believe, that Mayhew has got it back again. Something further however must be going on, for Winter called Bishop and Hall, the only first-class fellows he could find, into his study after school."

"They won't bless him for that," said Fox. "However, here we are at the common, and that's something better to think about. All right! They are all here, I see."

Everything was in readiness, as Fox had affirmed, when they arrived. The two officers had driven

in a tandem from London; and the horses, which had been walked down quite early in the morning, and put up during the intervening hours at the inn stables, had just appeared on the ground when the boys came up. Heath took a good look at May Blossom, whom he had never seen before. She was a showy-looking mare, light gray in colour, with an arching neck and a springy step; but Heath's keen eye saw at a glance that she lacked the strong muscular chest and breadth of loin which characterized her rival. "There oughtn't to be any doubt at all about this," he thought. "Field Marshal ought to beat her as easily as possible, and will too, if he is properly ridden. I only wish I had the riding of him, and fifty pounds dependent on the result. But Brackley is so crotchety about his horse, that I shouldn't like to propose that. If anything went wrong, he would be sure to lay it upon me; and besides, old Brickbats might hear of it, and make a row."

His reflections were interrupted by Brackley, who took him by the arm, and led him away from the others. "It is a great nuisance," he said, "but I have been disappointed, at the last moment, of the fellow who was to have ridden for me, and who knows Field Marshal well. I can find no one but this fellow here, whom I never saw before, and whose looks I don't much like, now I do see him. What is more, I guess he is a stone at least heavier than Lawes there, who is to ride for Nicolls. Tell me

what you think of him;" and as he spoke he pointed to a man in the dress of a stable-helper, who stood at a little distance.

"He is certainly heavier than Nicolls's rider," said Heath, "but I don't fancy you could find any one here likely to suit you. Let him get into the saddle, and we shall be better able to judge."

"Ah, to be sure. Here, Hallett, be so good as to mount and take the horse over that fence there." The man obeyed, and Heath watched him carefully for a few minutes. "I advise you to have him," he said; "he has a good seat, and certainly you will find no one better in these parts."

"I suppose not, unless——" Brackley stopped short in his speech, and then turning to the stableman, said, "You shall ride for me, Hallett; and remember it will be a guinea extra if you win. And now, Nicolls," he continued, calling to that individual, who stood a few yards off chatting gaily with Fellowes and Fox,—"and now, Nicolls, I suppose there is no reason, is there, why the match shouldn't come off at once?"

"None that I know of," returned Nicolls. "But let us first be sure of what has been arranged. They are to begin, are they not, Heath, at this low fence here, and then to go on to that post and rail near the plump of furze there? If both get over that all right, the third is to be the gate between those two lines of hurdling; and the last, that high fence about a hun-

dred yards yonder to the right. That is what has been fixed on, is it not, Heath?"

"That's all right," said Heath. "If they both get well over that, you must have it out somewhere else. You'll find nothing higher here."

"Not much chance of that," muttered Hallett under his breath. "My horse may go over it, though I don't think he will, but his'n certainly won't."

"Are you inclined to bet on this?" asked Fellowes of Heath. Here is Nicolls offering two to one in guineas on May Blossom, but neither Fox nor I are able to take him."

"Two to one in guineas, Nicolls!" repeated Heath slowly. "Well, I have no objection, Nicolls. I take the bet."

"Very good," said Nicolls, registering it in his book. "And now I suppose they had better mount and begin. Is May Blossom to go first at the leaps, or Field Marshal, Brackley?"

"They had better take it in turns to go first. My horse shall lead off at the first leap, yours at the second, and so on," returned Brackley. "That will be the fairest way I think."

Nicolls assented, and the men were soon in their saddles. As every one had expected, both horses cleared the first fence with ease. They then proceeded to the post and rail, which were considerably higher. Here too no advantage was gained. Field Marshal made the

leap without any apparent difficulty, but it was plain that his rider had not the command over him which Tom Lawes exercised over his horse. He swerved from the direct line in riding at it, and was with some difficulty pulled in by Hallett on the other side. May-Blossom, who had preceded him, offered a marked contrast to this, flying lightly and gracefully over the leap, and calling forth loud applause from the bystanders.

"How neatly she does it!" exclaimed Fellowes, as they moved up to the third place of trial; "as light as a bird, and as quiet as a lamb. That's the mare for my money, if I had it to bet."

"You're about right," said Nicolls, delighted with the approbation bestowed on his favourite. "Heath, I suppose you are not disposed to double that bet, are you?" This was said more as a piece of chaff than with any serious notion of its being accepted. To the surprise of almost every one present, however, Heath replied,—

"If you like it, Nicolls, I don't object. Let our bet be four guineas to two. I'm content."

"So am I," said Nicolls, and the bet was recorded as before.

The gate between the rows of hurdling, before which the lookers-on were now stationed, was a more formidable object than the last had been. It consisted of a gate perhaps five feet high, but over the topmost bar a strong rail had been nailed to prevent cattle

from forcing it open. Thus increased, the total height might have been something under six feet. Hallett, as he turned his horse back to ride him at it, did not feel quite assured of the result. He had, as he thought, succeeded tolerably well in quieting down Field Marshal's excitement during the interval that had elapsed between the leaps. But whether the horse chafed at being ridden by a jockey to whom he was not accustomed, or the man's hand on his mouth was sharper than he liked, or whatever the cause may have been, he was no sooner set in motion than he began to plunge and rear violently; and then, finding himself still urged forward, he laid his ears back, seized the bit between his teeth—a trick which he was occasionally in the habit of playing—and rushed away at the top of his speed. Perceiving the gate when within a few yards of it, he slightly moderated his pace, gathered his legs well under him, and rushing straight at it, sprang like a deer clear over the topmost rail. Alighting seven or eight feet beyond it, he continued his course at the same furious speed, and he had gone half a mile at least before Hallett could succeed in checking him and bringing him back, exhausted but still restive to the place whence he had started. He had got over the leap, however, and all eyes were now turned upon May Blossom, who advanced to her work with the same agility and coolness as before. Tom Lawes was a lighter weight, a better jockey, and moreover had the advantage

of knowing thoroughly the animal he rode. Notwithstanding these points in his favour, however, he could only just succeed in carrying his horse over the leap. It was evident to Heath, if not to all present, that the limit of May Blossom's powers had now been reached.

"We mustn't try her at anything higher, sir," said Lawes apart to Nicolls. "It was a nearish thing getting her over that rail. She hadn't a ha'porth more of go in her, that's sartain. But never you mind, Mr. Nicolls, t'other horse won't clear that highest fence neither. I'll go bail to any amount he won't. If he was well ridden, by a lighter weight, as he was well used to, or who was well used to him, p'raps he might, though I am no ways so sartain of that. But that Hallett ain't up to him at all—any one may see that. It was good luck for 'em, more than anything else, that he didn't rush clear through that gate, instead of over it; and I 'spect if it hadn't looked to him pretty nigh as solid as a wall, from the pieces nailed across it, he would have done it. But they'll never get him over that fence there, you may take my word for it, sir."

In the meantime Brackley was holding a similar conference with Heath at another part of the ground.

"That fellow Hallett can't ride him at all," said the former angrily. "He pulls at his mouth as if he were steering a boat. It is just the same thing as it

was at the steeple-chase. Field Marshal can't bear to have his mouth pulled. He'll turn rusty, as he did then."

"No," said Heath, "I agree with you. After that last exhibition I wouldn't let him try it again. But the horse can clear the high leap there, that I am certain of; and what is more, Brackley," he added, lowering his voice still more, "the mare can't. She can't go two inches higher than that last leap—not to save her life."

"Do you think so?" returned Brackley. "I fancied so myself; but I wasn't sure."

"I am, though," said Heath. "The high leap there is a good foot higher than the gate; and May Blossom couldn't come within ten inches of it—not if a pack of wolves were behind her."

"That makes it all the more vexatious," said Brackley. "Of course, if neither clears the last fence, this will be a drawn wager. I don't care so much about the money; but I am determined to give Nicolls, with his continual chaff about Field Marshal, a good setting down. I say, Heath, I hardly like to ask you, as you may not like it; but would you mind riding Field Marshal over that leap? I would ride myself, but my weight is a good two stone heavier than Hallett even, and I doubt whether Field Marshal could carry me over such a leap. But you are as light a weight as Lawes there, and the horse knows you, and you know him."

"Of course," he resumed a minute afterwards, seeing that Heath appeared to hesitate, "I don't ask you to do this, if you have any objection. Of course, also, I should ask you to share the stakes with me if we win. That would only be fair, you know; for certainly I can't win without your help. What do you say?"

While Brackley was speaking, Heath had been rapidly running over the advantages and drawbacks of the proposed arrangements. On the one side, he had little doubt that he could take Brackley's horse over the leap that still remained. He had ridden him, when hunting during the previous winter, over fences quite as stiff. The only risk was that it might come to Dr. Brooksbank's ears, who would probably confine him to the play-ground for all the remainder of the half-year. On the other hand, if he declined to ride, the wager would be a drawn one; for he was satisfied Hallett was not equal to the task he had undertaken. In that case, of course, he would not win Nicolls's four guineas; and there were the ten pounds besides, which Brackley offered him. That made more than fourteen pounds altogether. It was quite worth braving the chance of old Brooksbank's wrath for such a sum as that.

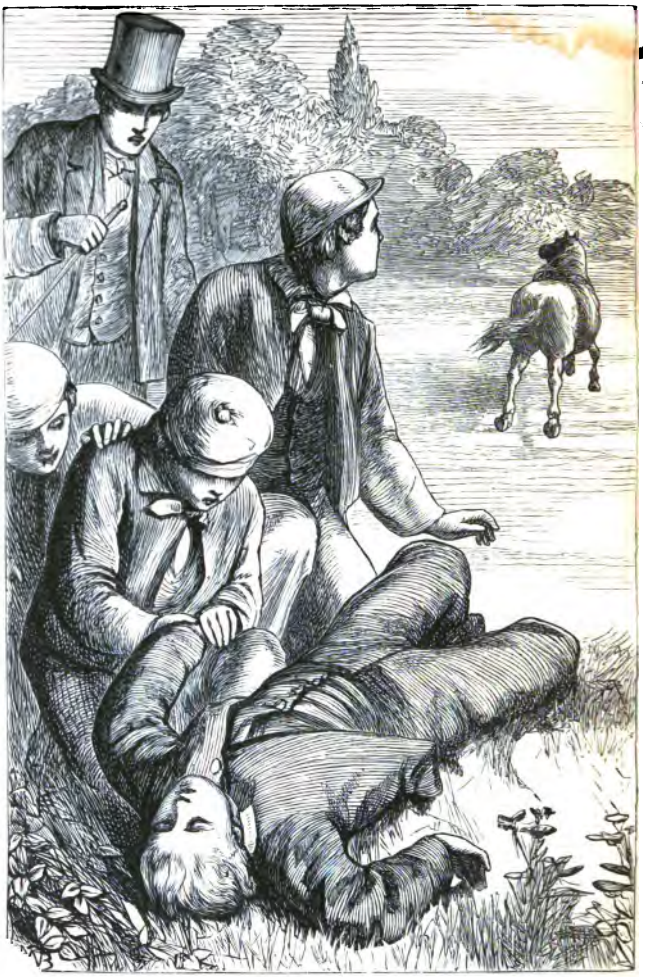
"I shall be happy to oblige you, Brackley," he said. "Just lend me your spurs and cap, and I make no doubt I can put him over it. We must wait a little of course to let him get his wind again, after that

last bolt of his. Desire Hallett to dismount, and walk him up and down quietly for ten minutes or so."

While these preliminaries were being carried out, Bishop and Hall, who had at length been dismissed by Mr. Winter, made their appearance on the ground, red-hot with running. They were divided between their regret at having missed the first three leaps, and their eagerness to relate what had occurred at home. The other boys gathered round them, and an animated conversation ensued, which lasted until notice was given that the final trial was going to commence. The interest felt by the Brunswickers was greatly increased as soon as it was known that Heath was going to take Field Marshal over the last leap, in place of the groom who had hitherto ridden him. There was some disposition on the part of May Blossom's backers to demur to this change of jockeys; but it had been clearly agreed from the first, that there was to be no restriction as regarded riders, and the objection was withdrawn. Heath was on the point of putting his foot into the stirrup, when Fox took him by the arm, and led him aside.

"I say, Heath," he said, in a tone of alarm and vexation, "do you know that Winter has somehow or other found out that business about young Gray—the putting him through the gate, I mean, to fetch the spirits last Thursday evening?"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Heath, though his heart



The Last Leap. P. 397.

[illegible] when he [illegible] his interview with [illegible] "How in the world could he get [illegible]"

"He has been sitting up with Gray, and he [illegible] him go on about it while he was [illegible] I believe. I heard [illegible] him up to making further inquiries. He has been questioning Bishop and Hall, the only fellows he could find who were at the supper, as to whether they had anything to do with it. Luckily they didn't know that we sent [illegible], and denied all part in, or knowledge of it. But there's Gore——"

"[illegible] him," said Heath, "has Winter [illegible] it [illegible]"

"So Bishop and Hall say. He told them [illegible] him into his study if they saw him; but [illegible] came [illegible] off here, and didn't chance to fall in with him. But of course, if he is anywhere about the play-ground, Hiems will get hold of him, and very likely pump it all out of him. I don't know what has come to Gore. He has been as speeney as a [illegible] of late."

"Don't be afraid, Fox," said Heath, [illegible] which was peculiar to him; "he wo[illegible] [illegible] subject. I [illegible] you; at least, [illegible] leave. He knows better than to [illegible] as this [illegible] is over, I'll go straight [illegible] all [illegible] Trust me for doing that."

As he spoke, he moved towards [illegible]

misgave him when he remembered his interview with Gore. "How in the world could he get hold of that?"

"He has been sitting up with Gray, and heard him go on about it while he was rambling in his head, I believe. He heard enough to put him up to making further inquiries. He has been questioning Bishop and Hall, the only fellows he could find who were at the supper, as to whether they had anything to do with it. Luckily they didn't know that we sent Gray, and denied all part in, or knowledge of it. But there's Gore——"

"Rot him," said Heath, "has Winter been at him?"

"So Bishop and Hall say. He told them to send him into his study if they saw him; but they came straight off here, and didn't chance to fall in with him. But of course, if he is anywhere about the play-ground, Hiems will get hold of him, and very likely pump it all out of him. I don't know what has come to Gore. He has been as spooney as a girl of late."

"Don't be afraid, Fox," said Heath, with the short laugh which was peculiar to him; "he won't speak on that subject, I promise you; at least, not without my leave. He knows better than to do it. But as soon as this match is over, I'll go straight back, and make all safe. Trust me for doing that."

As he spoke, he moved towards the spot where

Field Marshal was standing, and laying one foot in the stirrup, sprang lightly into the saddle. Field Marshal started, and laid down his ears; but a few soothing words and caresses, and the familiar hand and seat of his old rider, soon quieted his excitement.

"I am ready now, Brackley," he said, in a louder voice. "It is May Blossom's turn, I believe, to go first this time. I am prepared to follow."

"May Blossom won't attempt this leap," said Nicolls. "Lawes and I are satisfied that she can't do it. If your horse goes over it, Brackley, I shall be ready to pay the stakes."

"Very good," said Heath. "Now then, Field Marshal, old boy, you and I have managed many a tougher job than this. We will show them the way over it."

He turned Field Marshal back to some distance from the fence, and called to all the spectators to withdraw behind the starting-place, so that nothing might occur to disturb his horse's nerve. Then he started at an easy canter, increasing his speed as he drew nearer the fence. The horse, to all appearance reduced once more to complete subjection, galloped straight as a die towards the mark, and obedient to hand and spur, rose splendidly at the leap. But at the very moment of his spring, a swallow skimming lightly across the landscape, crossed his line of sight. The horse, whose nerves had not fully recovered from their recent excite-

ment, started and swerved in his career; his foot struck against the strong upper bar of the fence; he fell forward, and flinging his rider on the turf beyond, rolled heavily over him. The next moment the horse rose again, and dashed wildly away, to all appearance uninjured. But the rider lay on the field, stark and motionless as the broken rail beside him. Horror-struck, the spectators rushed up. They raised him from the ground, they loosened his cravat, and flung water on his face. Nicolls, springing on May Blossom's back, galloped off at frantic speed for the nearest surgeon. But before the sound of his horse's hoofs had died away, the bystanders had ascertained too surely that his mission was in vain.

The fall had broken the vertebræ of the neck, and death had been instantaneous.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PEACE AT THE LAST.

THE rumours circulated among the boys on Barker's Common stated what had really occurred with tolerable accuracy; though some important particulars were omitted, or but imperfectly understood. By the morning post on Monday Tyrrell, to his great surprise, had received a letter from his father, in reply to his application for money addressed to him more than a fortnight before. The latter forwarded the sum required, and informed his son that his own letter had only that morning been received. "I perceive," wrote Mr. Tyrrell, "that yours is dated Thursday, April 6th. I conclude you must have written the 6th instead of the 20th; which is the day, as I see by the post mark, on which your letter left Martin's Green. As regards the application itself, I will not deny that I am pained, and in some measure surprised. But I did not expect you never to fall: that is what none can hope either for others, or for themselves — your father least of all, my boy. I am quite satisfied with your expressions of sorrow, and your resolution to avoid the temptation into which you have fallen for the future. If I accept your offer to deduct this sum from your allow-

ance next half-year, it is in no spirit of anger that I do so, but because I feel that it will be best and happiest for you to remember hereafter that you did all that you could to make restitution for your fault. Always make your father your confidant, my brave boy, whenever you are in trouble, and be assured of his sympathy and help."

Tyrrell bent his head over these wise and loving words, and the tears sprang into his proud eyes. What injustice he had done his father, and on what slender grounds! Numberless instances of like kindness in time of need crowded upon his recollection; slight many of them, it was true, but still evincing the same strength of affection. Ought he not to have felt sure that his letter had been destroyed, or sent to a wrong address, or accidentally overlooked, or that any other of the casualties which were possible had occurred—anything sooner than have believed, as he did, that his father had received it, and refused to notice its petition? His pride was humbled for the moment, but the next it rose up in twofold bitterness against the person whose carelessness or malice had caused the delay. It was his fault, whoever he might be, which had caused him to think thus unworthily of his father; and he resolved that he would make him pay the penalty of his offence, if he should by any chance discover him. But who could there be who would attempt such a thing, or how could it have been contrived? Surely the servants could

not have been bribed to omit putting his letter into the post; or if so, how came it to go at all? Again, who could have been the instigator? His thoughts naturally reverted to Heath, who had shown the most determined malignity for some weeks past, and who was, in his judgment, quite capable of any meanness or treachery. Well, Heath might be at the bottom of this, or of the abstraction of the money either; and in that case, only let him discover it, and—his eye lighted on a stout whalebone rod, which he occasionally used as a walking-stick—Heath would find that he had made a mistake which he would repent to his dying day! At present however there was no kind of evidence against him, and it was clearly the right thing for him to take the guinea and a half which he had just received, to Mr. Mayhew; and then to write his father a full account of the strange circumstances which had taken place since his last letter to him. He resolved to do this immediately after school; but before that time arrived, as the reader has already heard, Mr. Winter publicly announced, by Dr. Brooksbank's permission, to the assembled boys, the discovery which he had made as to the payment of Giles's debt. "We think it right to say," he continued, "that Tyrrell is fully and honourably quit of any suspicion which might attach to him from the singular circumstances attending that part of the matter: and we do not doubt that some explanation, equally satisfactory, will be given

at some future time of the disappearance of Mr. Mayhew's money. Tyrrell, in my own name, and those of Mr. Rawdon and Mr. Mayhew, I wish to express the regret we feel at having entertained any doubt of your integrity."

Tyrrell bowed coldly. He was, of course, pleased at being absolved of a charge, which—however much he might despise it—was vexatious and humiliating. The kindness of Mr. Winter's words and manner might have deserved a more gracious acknowledgment; but he could not forget that not only had there been an aspersion on his honour, but that even now it was not wholly removed.

The ushers had no sooner left the room than several of the first-class boys, headed by Stapleton and Robinson, came up to Tyrrell.

"I ask your pardon," said the former frankly. "I have done you injustice. Will you shake hands, Tyrrell?"

"I have no objection to do so," said Tyrrell stiffly. "I am glad you have discovered your mistake."

"I wish to say the same as Stapleton," said Robinson, though somewhat more coldly, for Tyrrell's manner repelled him. "I think you will admit that until the explanation was given, which Winter has just made, any one might reasonably have his doubts about the matter. However, I am extremely sorry, and hope you will forget what has happened."

"I cannot agree with you, I am afraid," answered

Tyrrell, "as to the reasonableness of your suspicions, but I am willing to forgive them."

The two boys shook hands, but without cordiality; and the others, who had come with the same intentions as Stapleton and Robinson, hung back as they heard Tyrrell's answer.

"I am sorry for the mistake," said Bishop bluntly, "but I don't know that I am going to be forgiven in that way either."

"No, nor I," said Hall. "All the fellows in the school thought the same that I did, and so did the masters too. I don't mind saying I'm sorry, but I'm not going to eat dirt exactly."

"No one wants you to do so," retorted Tyrrell. "If you think you have been to blame, you had better say so; if not, you can leave it alone."

"Well, I for one shall leave it alone then," said Hall. "This beats the Emperor of Morocco, that it does!"

Tyrrell made no answer, and was turning coldly away, when a message was delivered by a junior boy, requiring all the first class who could be found to go to Mr. Winter's study.

"I must give this money to Mr. Mayhew," said Tyrrell, "and I will then come immediately." The others obeyed in silence, and found the usher alone, with an expression of grave sadness on his features such as they seldom wore.

"Where are the others?" inquired Mr. Winter, glancing round.

"Tyrrell has gone to Mr. Mayhew to pay him some money, I believe, sir," said Stapleton. "He will come as soon as he is able."

"And Heath and Fellowes had gone out for a walk before your message came," added Bishop. "Gore, I believe, is somewhere in the play-ground."

"Heath and Fellowes! I am sorry for that. But it cannot, I suppose, be helped. Well, what I wish to say to you all is this. You heard me mention in school a circumstance which I had learned during my attendance at poor Gray's bedside. But there was something else which I also gathered from his wanderings, which I have mentioned privately to Dr. Brooksbank. It is by his desire that I now speak to you. I have reason to believe that the exposure to the rain, which brought on the boy's illness, was not his own act, as has been hitherto supposed. I find that he was put between the bars of the play-ground gate, after it was shut, in order to bring some bottles of spirits through the pouring rain from the further end of the play-ground, and that he was afterwards severely beaten. If this be true—in whatever way Dr. Brooksbank may be disposed to deal with it as a school offence—those who have been guilty of it should at least express their sorrow for such an act of, I trust, thoughtless cruelty, but which in all human likelihood will cost the poor little boy his life."

He paused, and looked at the faces before him. There was much surprise; but, so far as he could see

no consciousness of guilt on any of them. "I can assure you, sir," said Robinson, "that until this moment, I never heard of such a circumstance as you speak of. I know nothing of any boy put through the play-ground gate, nor of any spirits brought in."

"Nor do I," said Stapleton. "I know nothing at all of the matter."

"And you?" continued Mr. Winter, looking at Bishop and Hall.

"Spirits may have been brought in, sir; but I have never heard a hint of any boy being put through the play-ground gate; or of Gray being obliged to go out in the rain for any purpose at all; or of his being thrashed either," replied Bishop.

"Nor have I, sir, I can assure you," added Hall.

"That is so, is it? I can trust your words, I know. I suppose it must, after all then, have been the wandering of delirium, though it sounded strangely consistent; and though Gray, when I questioned him this morning, did not deny it. Well, I am very glad to think that it is a mistake. It would have been a miserable thing if any boy here should carry about with him in after-life the recollection of having caused another's death by thoughtless cruelty. You may go, boys, and if you see Gore or Tyrrell, send them to me."

The boys departed; and Mr. Winter was turning to the window, when he heard a slight noise in a ner of the room; and looking round, saw a figure

half hidden behind a screen. It came forward as soon as his eye rested on it, and fell on its knees before Mr. Winter. The usher made a step backwards in much astonishment. It was Gore. Mr. Winter motioned to him to rise, which he did reluctantly.

"Oh, Mr. Winter," he exclaimed, "I came in while you were speaking to them, though you didn't see me. I heard all that you said. Do you really think that it was that exposure to the rain—that—that was the only cause of his illness?"

"Of *this* illness? Yes, Gore," replied Mr. Winter gravely. "His life could not have been a long one, no doubt. But there was no active disease when this attack came on. I must not withhold the truth, however painful. I cannot but conclude from your question and demeanour, that you know something of the matter which I have been mentioning to your school-fellows. Is that so?"

Gore did not reply. Mr. Winter looked hard at him, and perceived that there was a struggle going on in his mind.

"Gore," he said, "you heard what I said to the boys just now. If you had anything to do with the piece of wanton cruelty, of which I must now believe this poor little boy has been made the subject, your only course is to own and ask pardon for it."

Gore grew very pale. "I have promised that I would not say anything about it," he said.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Winter. "I am sorry to hear

that. It was very wrong to make any such promise; and I need hardly remind you surely, that one wrong act cannot be made better—but only worse—by a second.'

"Do you think I ought to speak, in spite of such a promise?" asked Gore.

"If it was your duty to speak before you made it, it must be your duty to speak still. No promise to evade a plain and positive duty can bind the conscience. God is greater than man."

"I feel that you are right, sir," said Gore. "I *will* tell you." And instantly, as though he feared his own resolution unless he put it at once into execution, he proceeded to relate the whole history of the supper party; of the proposal to procure the spirits; the plan agreed upon for their introduction; its temporary derangement by the locking of the play-ground gate before the usual hour; and the proposal to put little Gray through the bars, and send him to fetch the bottles.

"We did not know that it was raining, sir; at least, we did not fancy it was enough to do him any harm. As for his having been beaten, that was afterwards, when Heath—when we, I mean—were afraid of his telling of us. It was not I who struck him, sir, I can assure you." He paused, more from want of breath apparently, than from having concluded what he wished to say.

"Well, Gore, I am glad you have told me the truth. I am glad that you do not defend a thought-

less and most unkind act; and am also glad you were not the one who beat him severely with the whip, as it was but too plain from the poor little boy's unconscious disclosures, that some one had done. Have you more to say?"

"Yes, sir, if you will hear and advise me. I have been very greatly to blame in another matter. I did another boy an injury, and I passed my word in the same way that I would not tell what I had done. But I feel now that I never ought to have made such a promise." Then, with downcast eyes, and cheeks burning with shame, he revealed the conspiracy against Tyrrell; the detention of the letter, and the means employed to make Giles accuse him to the masters; and last of all, his taking the money from Mr. Mayhew's purse, though he only designed it (he most earnestly declared) as a temporary loan, in order to pay his debt to Brackley. "I wrote immediately, and obtained the money," he said. "It was that which I gave you, sir, wrapped up in a parcel yesterday evening. I meant to have given it—to have put it back into Tyrrell's desk, that is—only—only I was made to promise that I wouldn't."

Mr. Winter listened with pity, rather than disgust, to the disclosures of the poor weak boy, who had been so evidently the dupe of a more unscrupulous offender. But the matter was far too serious to be suppressed. Tyrrell, who still lay under some shadow of doubt, must be fully cleared: the whole circum-

stances must be made known to Dr. Brooksbank. It was difficult to see how Gore's share in them could escape severe punishment, notwithstanding his confession, and the patent fact that he had been the victim of others. Still less could his really guiltier and hardened accomplice be permitted to escape. While he yet hesitated, there was a knock at the door, and Tyrrell entered.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Winter," he said, as he noticed that Gore was present, and judged from the expression of his face, and that of Mr. Winter, that they were occupied with some matter of interest; "I believe you sent for me. I was not aware you were engaged."

"Come in, Tyrrell," said Mr. Winter; "you are the very person I most wish to see. Gore, you have asked me what I think you ought to do. The first thing beyond doubt, is to tell Tyrrell what you have told me, and ask his forgiveness."

Tyrrell listened attentively, though coldly, as Gore complied. When the latter had concluded with an earnest appeal to him for pardon, he replied, much in the same tone in which he had answered Robinson and Bishop, but addressing Mr. Winter instead of Gore,—

"I do not wish to retain any resentment against Gore, sir. He has been throughout the tool of another. I take it for granted," he added, turning to Gore, "that Heath was the person who induced and helped you to remove my letter from the box, and who has

been at the bottom of all this malignity and spite. I think I have a right to require that you should tell me that."

"Do not oblige me to tell that," said Gore pleadingly. "I am not obliged to tell that, sir, am I?"

"I will leave it to Mr. Winter to say whether I have a right to require it or not."

"Perhaps you have, Tyrrell," said the usher, "but I am sure you will be wiser, and act more rightly, not to press it. It is better, as well as easier, to forgive a wrong, without seeking to know all the particulars of its history."

"I am willing to forgive it, sir," returned Tyrrell proudly. "I despise it far too much to resent it. As for Gore, he will hear no reproaches from me, though he can scarcely expect that we can be friends for the future. I have no anger against Heath either; but I shall require that his malice and falsehood shall be fully exposed and punished. After that, I shall trouble myself about him no more. He need fear nothing further from me."

"Tyrrell, Tyrrell," said the usher, in a low grave voice, "do you call this forgiveness? It may be the forgiveness of a heathen, but it is not that of a Christian."

"I do not see that, sir," said Tyrrell doggedly, though not disrespectfully.

"You do not? Think a moment. You pray morning and evening that God will 'forgive you, as

you forgive others.' Is this then the way in which you hope God will forgive you?"

Tyrrell made no reply.

"Put your own speech into the mouth of the Great Judge in that Day when you will be tried. 'You shall hear no reproaches from me; but you cannot expect that we should be friends for the future. After the full exposure and punishment of your guilt, I shall trouble myself about you no more!' Tyrrell, what would be your lot in eternity if you *were* to be forgiven thus?"

Tyrrell was still silent. The struggle between the good and evil in his heart grew fiercer and fiercer. The demon was worsted, but would not yield. He still hesitated, when suddenly the door burst open, and Mr. Mayhew, white as a sheet, with horror stamped on every feature, hastily entered the room. He drew Mr. Winter into the passage, and exchanged a few hurried words with him. Then Mr. Winter returned with a look of solemn awe upon his face. He laid a hand on the shoulder of each of the boys, and drew them quietly to the window.

They looked out on the scene before them with a feeling of wonder blended with alarm. The playground was filled with a motley group, in which the ushers, the boys, and the servants of the establishment were mingled in wild confusion with strangers of different ranks and ages; but all looking with the same expression of hushed solemnity towards the

gate, through which some object was imperfectly discerned, and which appeared to be advancing towards them. Presently those nearest gave way, right and left, before a kind of procession, consisting of six labouring men, carrying on their shoulders a gate, which had been taken off its hinges, and on which a form lay extended. As they passed slowly and silently by the windows, the features of the Dead became distinctly visible.

"Gore," said Mr. Winter, in the same deep, low voice in which he had previously spoken, "there is the companion whom you feared more than God! Tyrrell, there is the enemy, whom you refused to pardon—whom you were determined to punish!"

The tumult had long died away; and the calm which follows on great excitement had succeeded, when Mr. Winter, accompanied by Gore and Tyrrell, entered the apartment where Freddy Gray was lying. The little boy, who was stronger and better, to all appearance, than he had been since the commencement of his illness, had been making eager inquiries after Tyrrell; and having learned also from Mr. Winter of Gore's earnest wish to ask his forgiveness, had begged that both might be allowed to take their last leave of him. No obstacle had been interposed by Dr. Haughton, who knew that his little patient's

sand was fast running out, and that no human hand could stay it; while Mr. Winter, perceiving that the shock of their companion's death had effected the work at which he had laboured with but imperfect success, was also willing that the wish of all three should be granted. If their sorrow and penitence had not been sincere, and there had been any fear that the serenity of Freddy's death-bed would be disturbed by angry passion, he would not have consented to their presence. As it was, he was glad to secure for them the lesson.

They entered. The softened light of the setting sun came through the drawn blinds, and a species of solemn calm seemed to be diffused through the apartment. Freddy lay composed and still—a quiet gladness in his eyes, and a radiant flush lighting up his pale features. A smile gathered on his lips as he saw the faces of his visitors; and though too weak to speak his welcome, he reached out his wan little hand to greet them. Tyrrell leaned against the wall, his manly features working with emotion which he rarely displayed; while Gore, whose slender self-command was wholly overcome, sank on his knees by the bedside, and in spite of Mr. Winter's warning gesture, poured forth a few broken words of contrition and entreaty. Gray took his hand and that of Tyrrell, and joined them together, laying his own upon them. He signed to Mr. Winter, and all knelt down, while he usher repeated aloud the prayers for the dying

ending with that which speaks of the spectacle of mortality teaching the survivors holy and heavenly wisdom. Then rising up, the two boys pressed their lips silently on the smooth white forehead, and left the room. Neither ever forgot the lesson of that hour. Tyrrell, who became an able and distinguished man, extended the hand of friendship to Gore; and the latter, though possessing little of Tyrrell's capacity, nevertheless went through life with credit and success.

As the door closed behind them, Mr. Winter rose from his knees, and seating himself by the bed-side, took Freddy's hand in his. A long silence followed. The golden light faded into a paler hue; the sweet evening air, laden with perfume from the flowers, stole noiselessly into the room; deeper and deeper grew the shadows of the coming night; but each was fully occupied by his own thoughts, and had no desire to speak. Those of the dying child were at once too bright and solemn to find record here; but Mr. Winter's imagination had strayed away to a spot far distant, and a scene which had taken place more than forty years before. His recollection was dwelling on a face strangely resembling that of the little sufferer by his side; which he had often seen turned upon him, not like Freddy's with grateful affection, but in distrust and alarm. How often had he reflected, with a sorrow for which there seemed no comfort, that the victim of his wanton cruelty had gone to bea-

his witness against him, which nothing could alter or suppress. Ah, this 'little one,' from whom he was even now parting, would bear away with him a different tale! Mr. Winter was too true a Christian to believe in any but the one Atonement for human sin; but surely there was a note of blessing and forgiveness in that assurance!

Perhaps something of the strange sympathy which the thoughts of men often have with one another reached the mind of the dying boy, and stirred him from the quiet into which he was slowly sinking.

"Don't be so sorry, Mr. Winter," he said in the low, sweet voice which those who have stood by the death-bed of the feeblest sufferers have sometimes heard. "Don't be so sorry, dear Mr. Winter. I'm not sorry, except for leaving you. Papa, and mamma, and little sister have all gone to Jesus, as you have often told me. They are happy with Him, and I am going to be happy too. I will tell Him all you have done for me." He paused for a moment, as if following up some line of thought in his own mind; then added in a faint whisper, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these"——and before the little lips could complete the blessing, they were silent in death.

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COX AND WYMAN, PRINTERS, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

JUN 1 1952